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ABSTRACT

A study examined how female elementary school teachers look upon their work, what they value and criticize about their occupation, and how they negotiate their work interests with sex role and family expectations. Research took the form of a case study, and qualitative research methods of participant observation and indepth interviewing were used to collect data over an 8-month period at an elementary school in the northeastern United States. One other school was also studied for a shorter period of time for contrasting purposes. This report centers on the discussions of four major themes which emerged from the data: (1) teachers' understanding of the nature of their careers; (2) importance of autonomy in their work lives; (3) their need for a sense of community among colleagues; and (4) their methods for resolving conflicts. The findings suggest that current understandings of teachers' lives have been limited by stereotypical assumptions about the nature of women. (Author/JMK)

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TEACHING AS AN OCCUPATION FOR WOMEN:

A CASE STUDY OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine how women elementary schoolteachers look upon their work, what they value and criticize about their occupation, and how they negotiate their work interests with sex role and family expectations. The research took the form of a case study. The researcher used the qualitative research methods of participant observation and indepth interviewing to collect data over an eight month period at an elementary school in the northeastern United States. A contrasting school was also studied for a shorter period of time for contrasting purposes. This report centers on the discussions of four major themes which emerged from the data: teachers' understanding of the nature of their careers; the importance of autonomy in their work lives; their need for a sense of community among colleagues; and finally, their methods for resolving conflicts. The findings suggest that our understandings of teachers' lives has been limited by our stereotypical assumptions about the nature of women.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this study we examine how women elementary schoolteachers look upon their work, what they value and criticize about their occupation, and how they negotiate their work interests with sex role and family expectations. The rise of the new scholarship on women enables us to examine questions of gender, freed from presumptions about women's perspectives on their experiences. Data was gathered using qualitative research methods of participant observation and indepth interviewing (See Appendix 1 for a full discussion of research methods and procedures). The research took the form of a modified case study. One school site, that is, was predominant. A contrasting school was also studied for a shorter period of time for comparative purposes.

How do women who teach elementary school think about their careers? What is the nature of their commitment to teaching in particular and to the idea of working in general? How do they develop relationships with their colleagues? How do they resolve conflicts with administrators, parents, and colleagues? What values are important to them? These are the questions on which this research focused.

THE FINDINGS

The themes discussed in this report emerged from the data collected. Discussions and observations with teachers suggested that elementary schoolteachers had central concerns in the ways they thought about their experiences. Each of these themes commands one chapter in this report.

One theme which emerged centered on teachers' understanding of their careers and of social evaluations of their occupational role. First, the teachers were concerned about the ways in which people thought about their occupation. They recognized the low social status teaching carried, and resented it.

They wished for greater recognition for their work, although they did not always perceive a connection between teaching's reputation as women's work and its low social status. Second, teachers thought about their careers in terms of the content rather than the structural implications of each job change. Their ways of thinking about career, in other words, did not follow the established pattern we have come to associate with career. Third, many women evidenced commitment to working as teachers. One example of this evidence were the strategies some teachers developed to overcome the objections of husbands who resisted the idea of their wives returning to work. These issues are discussed in Chapter 3, "The Intersection of Work and Career."

A second theme for teachers was their expressed concern for autonomy in their work. Two features of school life, the bureaucracy and imposing parents, appeared to teachers to limit their autonomy. Teachers developed conflicts with women in professional families who were full-time parents. While there were many reasons for this conflict, we suggest that a primary one is a struggle for enhanced occupational prestige. Teachers had a difficult time distinguishing their work from mothering. The era of rising expectations for women caused the women who taught elementary school at Vista City to desire the autonomy associated with professionalism. The mothers challenged these possibilities. These issues are discussed in Chapter 4, "'A Basic Fact of Human Life' --Autonomy in Teachers' Lives."

A concurrent theme with the need for autonomy was teachers' desire for a sense of community at the school. All teachers wanted a sense of connection among colleagues, though the nature of that connection varied. Teachers attempted to build community through formal and informal mechanisms. The formal mechanisms included teams, faculty meetings, and the teachers' lounge. The informal mechanisms included the interpersonal efforts of talking, helping, and defending. These issues are covered in Chapter 4, "The Quest for Community."

A final theme that emerged from the research focused on the ways in which teachers resolved conflicts between themselves and between themselves and different levels of administration. Four methods were categorized: unhappy compliance, the standoff, silent

noncooperation and the open challenge. We suggest that the women at Vista City Elementary were not the compliant teachers some scholars have suggested. Teachers challenged some issues on which they had major concerns. These issues are discussed in Chapter 6, "Teachers in Conflict."

THE NATURE OF THE LITERATURE

The study of elementary schoolteachers has rarely ignored this key feature of the population: the sex of its members. 87.2% of all elementary schoolteachers are women (National Education Association, 1977). Waller (1932), for example, discussed the interconnection between spinsterhood and the frustration of teachers. Simpson and Simpson (1969) maintained that teaching could never be a profession because it contained so many women. Lortie (1975) suggested that teaching is organized so that women can enter and leave it according to family schedules, and not miss out on developments in technical knowledge. Dreeben (1970) argued that women tend to be subordinate, and consequently, supervisors have a lot to say about the work of women in "women's occupations."

Gender figures prominently in two ways in this literature. First, the issue is approached collectively: what does it mean for an occupation to be labeled "women's work?" Second, the concerns are examined individually: what do the characteristics of women mean for the teaching profession? In both instances, scholars are unable to break the shell of assumptions surrounding our understanding of women in occupational life.

The profitability of gender as a research variable has been questionable. As these examples suggest, when gender has figured in the literature on elementary schoolteaching it has generally diminished rather than expanded our understanding of this occupational role (and of the women occupying it). Why has this happened?

First, we might identify values which reflect narrow assumptions about the role and meaning of work in women's lives. This perspective reflects stereotypical

assumptions about women's low career commitment, fear of job complexity, and lack of aspirations.

A second set of values reflects the social devaluation of women's work. Teaching, first seen as a serviceable occupation for single women, and then as an appropriate job for married women with families, is now portrayed as a respite for those who cannot compete in the professional marketplace. In this view, teaching is a job for the ordinary woman. Rising expectations among women for job opportunities in other fields have reinforced this view.

The third issue follows from the first two. Designated as women's work, elementary schoolteaching appears suitable for ordinary women because work with children is a central feature of the occupational role. This feature has stimulated the construction of teaching as an extension of domesticity.

A focus on gender, then, has tended to obscure rather than expand our understanding of elementary schoolteaching. In fact, research on elementary schoolteaching which discusses gender has tended to reveal more about social values toward women, and about the researcher's values toward women, than of the women occupying this role. The new scholarship on women, however, provides an opportunity to consider the key factor of gender in relation to the occupational study of elementary schoolteaching freed from stereotypical assumptions about women who choose to teach children for a living.

The themes which emerged in this study reflect social meanings this work carries. These cultural values in turn help shape the perspectives the women teachers hold toward their work. One consequence of the devaluation of women's work is the competition between women who teach and women who parent. Women who teach work full time, yet they do so in a traditionally female occupation that is classified as a semi-profession by social scientists. It is regarded suspiciously as a variety of mothering or nurturing by women who work in the home as well as by women in professional careers. Teachers attempt to defy this image of "domesticity" which tags them through construction of an ideal of autonomy embodied by the male model of "professionalism." We discuss these concerns in Chapter 3.

Our failure to understand elementary schoolteaching as an occupation reflects our failure to take gender into substantive consideration. Teachers' occupational aspirations, for example, have been difficult to study because they often do not follow the "career ladder" as we presently understand it. Since these aspirations often exclude administrative work which should professionally objectify these aspirations, and since there are so few leadership positions in schoolteaching, the occupation has been described as "careerless" (Lortie, 1969). We discuss teachers' understandings of career in Chapter 3.

Let us contrast the traditional ways in which teaching has been examined by sociologists with the perspectives found in research from the new scholarship on women.

Traditional Sociological Perspectives

Traditional scholarship on teachers has held the female gender to be a detriment to individual work commitment and to the occupation as a whole. What women do must be accounted for against the larger context of male activity. The activities of women are not a goal for which other human beings aim. Examples are common in the literature: "To persist in teaching is, in a sense, to be 'passed over' for higher position or marriage" (Lortie, 1975: 89). There is no honor in teaching as a life-long commitment. Comparing nursing and teaching, another well-known sociologist notes that no matter how bright, how capable or how experienced nurses are, they do not "advance" to positions on the medical staff. In teaching, one can make a little more money as the years advance, but one cannot as a teacher dramatically improve one's status or financial situation. Dreeben accounts for some of these difficulties because of the characteristics of women. They have low occupational commitment, they tend to be subordinate, and all women's occupations "appeal more to the heart than to the mind" (Dreeben, 1970: 131). Teachers of young children, in other words, must be more sentimental than intellectual.

Are teachers "fashioners of souls," as Thomas Carlyle suggested (Wittlin, 1965), or caretakers of rote learning? In recent years, popular magazines like Time and Newsweek have carried articles entitled,

"Help! Teacher Can't Teach," and "Teachers Are in Trouble." Lack of faith in teachers is not recent, of course, in spite of teachers' beliefs that in "the good old days" teachers were treated with respect. The image of the respected teacher lives in the minds of many elementary schoolteachers if not in the annals of literature.[1]

Waller (1932) called teaching the refuge of "unsalable men and unmarriageable women." John Reed commented that teachers were "men and women whose chief qualification is that they can plough steadily through a dull round of dates, acts, half-truths, and rules for style, without questioning, without interpreting, and without seeing how ridiculously unlike the world their teachings are" (Gelb, 1981: 14). Critics of teachers come in all political persuasions.

Teachers' low status has been related to the public's minimal respect for a teacher's intellectual endeavors, the lack of professional autonomy, the low degree of professionalization and the large number of women in the field. Labeled "semi-professions" (Etzioni, 1969), teaching, nursing, and social work are diminished in their professional standing by shorter training, a lack of control over technical knowledge, less legitimated status, less right to privileged communication, ahd less autonomy from supervision or societal control than are the professions. In spite of the varied reasons listed above, however, all of these factors relate to the fact that most teachers are women. Teaching is women's work.

Sociologists have rarely explored elementary schoolteachers' intellectual interests. According to Dreeben (1970), women's occupations "appeal more to the heart than the mind." The language of other researchers is almost identical: "The main intrinsic appeal of the semi-professions is to the heart, not the mind." and they have a "lack of drive toward

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[1] Everyone has some version of a story to tell about the good old days. Teachers' versions suggest they are not respected like they used to be. Parents' versions claim that teachers are not what they used to be.

intellectual mastery" (Simpson and Simpson, 1969). Nurturance is a key element of the work, and because it is, the occupation cannot gain professional standing. Teaching, at least elementary school teaching, becomes professional mothering (see Parsons, 1959).

Sociologists also relate the lack of professional autonomy to the preponderance of women in the occupation. The public is "less willing to grant autonomy to women than to men" particularly because women often share the cultural norm that women should defer to men (Simpson and Simpson, 1969). Dreeben (1970) explains that women's occupations tend to be subordinate, and that in these occupations supervisors have firm control over their subordinates' work. Looking at it from a slightly different perspective, "In some ways, the school principal resembles, not so much the administrator in the world of business and industry, as the patriarch presiding over a harem. The duties differ, but the structure is similar" (Hall, 1966). One would not apply this metaphor to a professional setting.

Sociologists have also explored traditional expectations about women's career commitment. Mason, Dressel and Bain (1959) suggested that "although there is a minority of women both single and married who have strong commitments to their jobs, most women enter the occupational world only as a short adventure between school and marriage, or else they work as a means of supplementing the family income." As Grambs (1957) noted, one of the roles of teachers is as a "person en route." For men this means a route up the career ladder. For women this means to marriage and out of the profession. Grambs did not find unmarried women happy in their professional roles, however, because they are unable to resign themselves to "professional celibacy." Instead, they go abroad on conducted tours--not to learn, he maintains, but to seek a way out. Dreeben (1970) found that women have low occupational commitment to teaching. Simpson and Simpson (1969) suggested that women are less "intrinsically" committed to work than are men. Hall (1966) argued that women do not see teaching as a career; they see it as an adjunct to domestic life, "something they can slip into, and step out of, as it suits their interests in their homes and/or families."

This literature maintains that normative expectations and stereotypes about women's roles carry over into the occupational setting, and are reflected in the research. Teaching becomes an extension rather than a repudiation of the female role. Structural constraints on women do emerge though. Caplow (1954) suggested that occupational inequality for women was guaranteed by customs, folkways, and a family structure that promoted the role of housewife as the leading ideal for women. Simpson and Simpson (1969) found material in their own research to support Caplow, though they analyzed the data differently. In a study of nurses, for example, they reported that those women who worked solely for money and whose work role was an instrumental extension of their family role, felt great impetus toward professionalization. Additionally, if the husband of a married worker was a colleague in the same field, chances were increased that a woman in one of the semi-professions would be committed to her work. Husbands who were also educators, for example, showed more favorable attitudes toward their wives continuing to teach than other husbands.

Over twenty years ago Lieberman (1959) related teachers' low status to prejudicial attitudes toward women. One change that would aid education in its attempt to upgrade professionally, he suggested, would be for there to occur "a cultural revolution concerning the role of women in American society." This cultural revolution was initiated. In the next section, we examine literature which takes cognizance of women's changed roles.

The New Scholarship on Women

The main body of literature reported in the previous section was undertaken in a framework which accepted, almost unquestioningly and as appropriate, the traditional images of women as predominantly family-centered, as subordinate in the organizational hierarchy because of pliable, deferent, passive attitudes, and who justify working for financial reasons. New perspectives in the study of women's work challenge these values. We can divide this scholarship into two categories. The first approach provides a different analysis of data, searching for a theoretical framework in which to understand women's

work. The second group consists of new research undertaken to find out how women behave in the workplace and what they think about their work. These two categories are not opposing strains of inquiry; rather the second has built upon the first.

Scholars researching the sociology of women in occupations have suggested that our framework for understanding and analyzing women in the working world has been inadequate and misleading because it is based on stereotypical assumptions about women (Coser and Rokoff, 1970; Epstein, 1976; Kanter, 1976; Laws, 1976; Lightfoot, 1977; Safilios-Rothschild, 1976; and Feldberg and Glenn, 1982). They have consequently criticized existing frameworks, and suggested others of their own. Several scholars, for example, have noted that studies of women in the labor force have been approached with a "social problems" or "deviance" orientation (Kanter, 1977b; Laws, 1976). Those aspects of women's work, that is, that appear to create "problems" are those which receive researchers' attention. Additionally, women's success at work must be justified and explained. Consequently, little attention has been paid in research to what women actually do when they work. It is only more recently that the characteristics of a woman's work (income, and status, hours and demands, or occupational culture) have become subjects for study (Kanter, 1977b).

Feldberg and Glenn (1979) criticized occupational sociology for handling the work of men and women differently. First, women's work was studied very little. When it was studied, a different model was applied to it, a model arising from the belief that the primary role of man is bread-winner, and the primary role of woman is mother. Women's "employment was seen as secondary to their real 'roles.' The result is the creation of two sociologies of work: the job model for men and the gender model for women" (p. 66). These two models ignore important aspects of workers' lives. The job model ignores aspects outside of work. Gender models consider only these and ignore important on-the-job concerns.

Another component in the traditional analysis of women at work has been the belief that women are not committed to their work: they appear unconnected, in the literature, to this aspect of their lives. Epstein (1976) noted that it is the belief that women lack career commitment which has constrained their

advancement possibilities no matter what the occupational sphere. Coser and Rokoff (1970) argued as well that women are expected to work, but they are not expected to be committed to their work. As Feldberg and Glenn (1979) noted, however, the variables considered differ in the study of men's and women's work. Career and family life are posed as mutually exclusive alternatives for women. These studies all question or challenge the traditional framework within which women's work has been studied.

Other research examines women's attitudes toward their work freed from assumptions that work against women. Marrett (1972) questioned the traditional portrait of women at work as acquiescent and uncommitted, and presented studies in which differences between men and women were found to be less than would be imagined. If studies were controlled for job level, education and age, what men and women look for in their work is not different (Saleh and Lalljee, 1969). Another study of men and women in a "research and development" unit found that women and men are highly similar with reference to work motivations and involvement in their jobs, with levels of job satisfaction and with the perceived conflict between the demands of work and home. These findings contradict the traditional protrait of women.

Grandjean and Bernal (1979) compared work orientations of male and female teachers working in coeducational and single-sex Catholic schools. They were interested in examining what they called "assumed" differences in the work orientations of men and women; specifically, they wanted to find out whether women like a tight structure, are more interpersonally oriented, and lack "intrinsic" interest in their work. Men and women teachers showed the same concerns for extrinsic and intrinsic aspects of teaching, though there were stronger concerns among women on some issues such as having the facilities, course load, and evaluative feedback meet their expectations. Also, male and female teachers in schools showed remarkably similar work orientations. And when men's and women's characteristics diverged, their differences contradicted prevailing stereotypes: it was women for whom professional autonomy was a bit more important and it was the men who were more concerned with keeping students under control. Since their sample size was N=249, more studies of this kind are needed.

The psychological impact of occupational conditions is, as the above studies indicate, of key concern to the sociologists of occupational life. Another group of researchers examined how women's work conditions affected their psychological functioning (Miller, Schooler, Kohn, and Miller, 1979). Finding no evidence that employed women are in any sense psychologically disassociated from their working lives, they studied what working conditions offered the most support. The job conditions that encouraged self-direction enabled women to behave in more open and flexible ways with others and with more effective intellectual functioning.

Miller (1980) examined what determines job satisfaction for male and female workers. She found that the actual job conditions themselves, rather than gender, have greatest effects on worker satisfaction. One gender difference, however, was described as "dramatic":

> It seems to be the autonomy associated with complex work that produces job satisfaction for men. For women, complex work does not necessarily imply autonomy; their subjective rewards come from the challenge and interest inherent in the tasks themselves, not freedom from control (Miller, 1980: 363).

Miller emphasized, however, that "Although there are differences in the particular occupational determinants of job satisfaction for men and women, the braod range of job conditions that influence affective responses to work is impressive for each."

All these studies of women's work commitment reinforce the idea that, indeed, women take their work seriously and that their working identity is an important part of their personal identity. Problematically, we must search for new ways to study women's work commitment. Measuring the work commitment of women in teaching by asking them how many plan to leave teaching within the next five years (Dreeben, 1970: 181), may simply not be an accurate measure. What the new scholarship on women has taught us is that we have developed many means of studying human behavior by focusing on male behavior and then transposing the methods or results to the study of women. Consequently, we may find ourselves measuring something other than what we had planned.

Is "the movement upward" the "essence of career" as Lortie (1975: 84) suggests? It certainly has been for men. To discover if indeed this is the case for women as well, or if it is not, we must approach our subjects inductively in order to discover what, for them constitutes a career.

Roth describes a career as:

> a series of related and definable stages or phases of a given sphere of activity that a group of people goes through in a given direction or on the way to a more or less definite and recognizable end-point or series of goals. This means that there must be a group definition of success or attainment of a goal (Roth, 1963: 94).

Roth emphasized the group definition of success.

Until recently, with the introduction of the new scholarship on women, we held a group definition for a successful career, but we defined the group as human beings. Our greater sensitivity has led us to see that the group definition on which we depended was a male group. If we are to expand our group definition to include groups of women, as well, we must study women's definitions and perspectives on their careers and on their occupational commitment.

We see these methodological differences in the work of Gilligan (1977, 1980, 1982). As her study of women's decisions became more sophisticated, Gilligan developed greater reliance on inductive methods. Her first major work was a study of women's decision-making process around abortions. As her work progressed, however, she no longer presented informants with a previously developed moral dilemma. Rather, she began to ask her respondents what they considered a moral dilemma to be. Kohlberg's original stages had been developed working with a sample of adolescent boys. It could no longer be assumed that the stages of moral development could be ascertained from a male adolescent sample and applied to a mixed population.

We might draw a similar analogy with the study of career. The movement upward may indeed be the essence of the male career, but it may not be the essence of career if we mean by career to include the

work of both men and women. Hence, we need a kind of research that takes less for granted.[2]

Research on women in teaching has gained more attention in recent years. Important research has examined the relationship between teachers' personal lives and their work in schools (Hall, 1982), and Vermont teachers' understanding of their roles as women and teachers during the first fifty years of this century (Nelson, 1982, 1983). Work on teachers in Ohio and other midwestern states has been undertaken as well (Quantz, 1982). Teachers in Boston have attempted to understand the impact of sexism on their work (Boston Women Teachers' Group, 1980).

Related Research

Up until this point, I have divided the literature review in such a way to take stock of the literature that has resisted stereotypical portrayals of women. There is literature on schoolteaching which falls into neither category. In a certain sense it is asexual. That is, the literature neither demeans the women in teaching because they are women (as did other examples in the traditional scholarship section), nor does it attempt to understand the impact of gender as a social construction in the lives of the women in the sample. Rather, the approach of the literature in this category is one of respect for the teachers as workers. How do teachers make sense out of different aspects of their lives. McPherson's (1972) excellent study of elementary teachers in a rural school, notes many of the same conflicts discussed in this report. Parent-teacher conflict, and collegial relations are two issues which have similarities.

Lieberman and Miller (1978) also relied on ethnographic methods to examine the ways in which teachers construct their social realities of everyday experiences.

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[2] If women who teach do not admire their administrators, for instance, perhaps they do not develop aspirations for administration. Hence, their careers might appear to fall in different arrangements. We discuss these concerns in Chapter 3.

While gender is not a factor in their discussion, the authors approach their subjects in order to understand how their world looks to them.

Fountain (1975) noted the predominance of women in the educational realm as a whole, but suggested that the high school is one of the few American institutions where about equal numbers of men and women can be found working together. She relied on both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the relationship between the private experience of teaching and its public definition. In particular, Fountain attempted to understand the ways in which teachers conceptualized growth in their profession. Like the other examples mentioned in this section, Fountain's work focused on understanding the ways in which a particular group of teachers made sense out of their occupational lives.

Early work on teachers' perspectives on their work employing qualitative methods was undertaken by Howard S. Becker. His dissertation (Becker, 1951) focused on role and career issues in the lives of Chicago teachers. Three influential articles resulted from the dissertation research (Becker, 1952a, 1952b, 1953; they were reprinted in Becker, 1970). Except for a few comments on the attractiveness (more specifically the lack of it) in some female respondents, Becker avoids all mention of the subjects as women. He examines them as workers. He envisioned the teacher's career as horizontal rather than vertical (1952a). He described the teacher's emphasis on the need for support from the school administration in the face of parental interference.

These works take for granted a conceptualization of human experience that has been challenged by the new scholarship on women (see, for example, Sklar, 1980; Stimpson, 1980; Westkott, 1979). Their subjects, the teachers, emerge with dignity, however, because the authors approach their subjects as human beings whose ways of looking at the world need to be understood.

Other important work which lies beyond the scope of this literature review includes that of Schlecty and Vance (1982). Using demographic data and longitudinal studies, they suggest what changing information tells us about teachers and the role of education in these times.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH SETTINGS AND SUBJECTS

The research on which this report is based was undertaken during the 1980-81 school year. Vista City Elementary[1] was the primary research site. Archduke Elementary was a secondary research site. I spent eight months interviewing and observing teachers at Vista City Elementary School and two months at Archduke Elementary.

Both elementary schools are located in a mid-size city in the northeastern United States. We call this city Vista City. The metropolitan area carries a population of about 175,000. To accomplish integrated schooling for federal mandates, Vista City relied on the establishment of magnet schools and voluntary transfers.

VISTA CITY ELEMENTARY

Vista City Elementary School looked like a nice old-fashioned school--at least from the front. The school was actually divided into two parts, each of which had been built at different times. The front part of the school sported a stucco exterior and a tiled gabled roof. The kindergarten rooms on the south side of the building were identifiable by their large bay windows and ample lighting. This part of the school was built in 1912. In 1932, what everyone still called "the new building" was built. In contrast to the old building of stucco and tiled gables, the new building was a functional brick rectangle. The old

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[1] The names of the locations, schools, and teachers have been replaced with pseudonyms to protect informants' promised anonymity.

building had beautiful, dark, polished wooden floors which were always kept shined. They quickly became slippery in snowy weather. The new building had linoleum floors which always showed scuff marks in spite of the janitors' efforts. The school was divided so that the primary children occupied the old building while the older students were in the new building, where lockers lined the hall.

Vista City Elementary School served 800 white and minority children in a mid-size city in the northeastern United States during the '80-'81 school year. There were sixty members of the total instructional staff, including aides and specials. Of these, only two were male classroom teachers, although men occupied positions of gym teacher, school psychologist, and several special, non-teaching positions. Most staff members were white. The principal was a white female, her administrative assistant a black male.

Vista City elementary school, located in a middle-class community, populated predominately by professionals and academics, had many children bused in from poorer neighborhoods; thus its school population reflected a wide variety of social classes. Vista City Elementary had an outstanding academic reputation. When achievement test results were published in the local newspaper each spring, Vista City elementary always boasted the highest scores.

The situation for Vista City teachers during the period of this study was a bit peculiar for this time of declining enrollments. While most schools in the district had staffs that were almost entirely tenured, particular circumstances had created a comparatively high percentage of untenured teachers. Job insecurity was high for these teachers as they did not know whether they would have a job the next year. The untenured teachers found these circumstances debilitating.

Vista City teachers ranged in age from early twenties to early fifties. Most were married, although many of the youngest teachers and two of the oldest were single. There were a couple of divorced women teachers and one of the male "specials" was also divorced. Some of those with husbands were married to men with conservative social values regarding women's roles. Those women who had taught in public school before marriage or after marriage but before

childbirth often had to develop strategies to appease their husbands in order to return to work, for their intense desire to work conflicted with their husband's wishes. We discuss these concerns in Chapter 3.

Teaching experience varied widely as well, from first-year teachers to those with twenty years experience. Most, however, had taught between five and thirteen years. In discussing their work histories, some women reported that they had always worked, but their career patterns look irregular when compared to men's. The most common change in their working situations after childbirth, for example, was for the women to drop out of formal employment and to start nursery schools or little childcare centers in their homes. This issue is covered as well in Chapter 3.

The picture of teaching that emerged from data collected at Vista City was a life with few emotional protections. If a teacher's father had a heart attack, if she broke up with her boyfriend, if her recovery from an operation was slow, if she discovered that her husband was having an affair, or that her child was having trouble in school--whatever the personal situation, she was expected as a teacher to come in and give fully of herself. More importantly, many teachers expected it of themselves. On bad days teachers felt that they could not occupy themselves with paperwork, an option they envisioned being available in other occupations.

While their moods, needs, and situations might vary, the needs of their students never did. Part of being a good teacher, as they saw it, meant being sensitive to and "on" with their students. There was little leeway for a personal life to enter in. Additionally, on a bad day, say during divorce proceedings, there was always the stray observer who came around and picked that particular day to observe. Confident teachers knew that they could tell the observer, "Not today," but they tended not to exercise this option. In this sense, then, teaching made high demands on those teachers who had the desire to do well.

For demographic data on the Vista City teachers, see Appendix I.

ARCHDUKE ELEMENTARY

Archduke Elementary School differed from Vista City in many ways. It was smaller, with a student body of five hundred and sixty. There were forty-odd members of the instructional staff (including aides but excluding three C.E.T.A. workers). The art teacher was not even full time. It was poorer and had a more homogeneous student body as well. Archduke served the poorest children in the city. It had the highest Hispanic and Native American enrollment of any school. Unlike Vista City, its racial integration was accomplished through integrated housing rather than busing, as people from other parts of the city rarely chose to come to Archduke. While racially integrated, it was economically unintegrated: there was hardly a pupil there who did not come from a poor family.

According to the teachers, almost every child in the school was "on welfare" and got "free lunch and breakfast." Many of their students, they said, had never been away from the two-block area in which they lived. They did not know what an escalator was, they did not know what a hill was, many had never been downtown, even though the downtown was only a block away.

Hygiene was another concern of the teachers. How often many of their students came to school without taking a bath. In the summer it was difficult just to remain in the same room with them. One well-known teacher in the school had once bought soap, towel, toothbrush, and a little cleaning kit for all of the kids in his class and made each child use these things before he would let them be in the classroom. Another reason many of the kids smelled aside from the lack of baths was that there was so little sleeping space for anybody, that kids would have to sleep in the same bed with little brothers and sisters who would pee on their siblings as well as on themselves. Then these kids would come to school smelling from the urine. One teacher described a time she "felt just awful." A pupil had either wet himself during class or had been wet on by a little sibling and just smelled so badly, that the teacher decided to send him home, even though she knew that he did not have any other clothes to put on.

In the winter, the teachers said, the kids often come to school with no jackets. In the freezing weather they only have a thin sweater on for protection against the cold. If it were not for the

box of coats that was kept in the principal's office, they would have nothing to give the kids to keep from freezing.

Teachers described the academic situation as "frustrating." Children often entered kindergarten at Archduke on the "level of three year olds." The teachers' goal was to bring them up to the level "where they should be at their age." While the situation they faced was difficult (i.e., "Sometimes I feel I could keep my lesson plan book open to the same page week after week and never change it"), one result seemed to be close relationships among staff members. Many teachers said that they were a "very close staff"and had developed great rapport with each other because of the "terrible conditions" they had to face in their work.

One similarity between Archduke and Vista City lay in their administration. Principals at both schools were women. Additionally, they counted themselves as friends, and would sometimes call each other on the phone to discuss a troubling issue. June Robinson, principal at Vista City, once said that when Rebecca Brownstein, the Archduke principal, called her for advice, she would reply how unable she was to offer advice, given the drastic contrasts in their situations. They overcame their different administrative styles to maintain their friendship.

CHAPTER 3

THE INTERSECTION OF WORK AND CAREER

During my first several months of interviewing and observing teachers, I noticed that they would often say to me, in response to a question to describe their work experiences, "I have always worked." In the early stages of my research I would then form a mental picture of a person who had worked continuously in a full-time position with some goal clearly in sight. I would settle back in my seat waiting to hear the details, thinking to myself, "I'm on to something. This certainly contradicts what I've read about women's in-and-out employment patterns." As the women described their work histories to me, however, they almost always described a discontinuous pattern of childraising, part-time work, and finally, full-time reentry into the employment market. Most surprisingly they would end their stories reiterating that they had always worked.

At first this discrepancy appeared as a contradiction. The meaning should not have been so elusive, however, for indeed, these teachers had always worked--very hard. Their statements described the amount of actual work rather than its physical location (in or out of the home), or its status level on the career ladder. The women at Vista City Elementary had certain understandings of the concepts of work and career. Their ways of looking at their occupational experiences did not always coincide with the patterns we traditionally associate with these categories. But then we have not, until fairly recently, realized the effects of studying women's lives from the outside in.

Studying women's lives from the outside in suggests that we may not understand how gender affects the social construction of human experiences. We see in relation to urban sociology, for example, that women "are continually perceived, but rarely perceivers" (Lofland, 1975: 144). The important implication of this insight is that women are not given the opportunity to participate in the social construction of their world. We see how their lives appear from the outside in, but we are not able to see their interpretations of important events in their lives.

This position as outsiders is particularly appropriate in the study of the careers of women in elementary schoolteaching. Teachers' occupational aspirations, for example, have been difficult to study because they often do not follow the career ladder as we presently understand it. Since these aspirations often exclude administrative work which should professionally objectify these aspirations, and since there are so few leadership positions in schoolteaching, the occupation has been described as "careerless" (Lortie, 1969). If we understand what a career is by looking at men's lives, and then we develop an understanding or construct of career that does not reflect women's lives, our construct is not generic. When we then attempt to apply this construct to women's lives we will always find the women's patterns wanting. We must remember that the original construct was not developed to explain the patterns of women's lives. What is the relationship between teachers' feelings about their work as it intersects with their careers, that is, with the patterns of their work?

In this chapter we will look at three aspects of the intersection of work and career. We will examine the work patterns of the women who taught at Vista City Elementary School, as well as their perspectives on these patterns; we will examine the high level of idealism in the teachers' work expectations; and finally, we will explore what these elementary school-teachers understand about the social meanings that their occupation carries and how these meanings are reflected in their day-to-day lives. First, however, we will look at more traditional notions of the idea of "career" in order to understand how women have remained on the outside.

DEFINITIONS OF CAREER

The social history of our understanding of the career, as it applies to men, has been admirably discussed by Bledstein (1976). He underscores the coherent and total nature of the nineteenth century understanding of career. As he suggests:

> What formed a career was not disconnected ends, not conditioned habits, not ad hoc actions, not practical good works, not an infinite series of jobs, but the entire coherence of an intellectually defined and

> goal-oriented life. That coherence was manifested at every stage of a career (Bledstein, 1976: 111-112).

Earlier understandings of careers were not thought of in terms of graduated stages, but rather "as a series of good works or public projects, performed within a familiar and deferential society which heaped respectability on its first citizens" (Bledstein, 1976: 173). This earlier understanding of career laid much more emphasis on the importance of the community than of the individual.

From this understanding, we have come to a notion of the professional career:

> A career, viewed structurally, is a succession of related jobs, arranged in a hierarchy of prestige, through which persons move in an ordered, predictable sequence. Corollaries are that the job pattern is instituted (socially recognized and sanctioned within some social unit) and has some stability (the system is maintained over more than one generation of recruits) (Wilensky, 1960 in Larson, 1977: 70).

From this perspective, career development has become more the result of individual striving to create a future within a society that supports a career structure for certain men.

The sociologists from the symbolic interactionist school have employed the term somewhat differently. "Career" is applied to the work anyone does, or to the pattern in anyone's life. Career has been applied in this sense to the work of janitors, assembly-line workers, schoolteachers, juvenile delinquents. It can be used, in other words, to study the lives of ordinary people.

An offshoot of the symbolic interactionist view is the work of E.C. Hughes and his followers (e.g., Becker, 1970). In this framework, "career" is employed subjectively rather than objectively: "Subjectively, a career is the moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions, and the things which happen to him" (Hughes, 1937: 137). From this perspective, the researcher attempts to understand how the actor imposes an ordered meaning on the situations and events which have occurred.

Hughes' use of "career" emphasizes how the world looks to the actor herself. It may give us entre to the ways in which their teaching careers appear to the women who experience them. When it comes to the ways that women in elementary schoolteaching talk about their careers, the professional model gives us little entré. In fact, as we said earlier, Lortie has called teaching "careerless." That many teachers do not see their lives this way presents us with a problem. We can either point to teachers' naivete in the professional work world, or we can try to understand how their careers might look to them.

CAREER PATTERNS

In this section, we will look at several aspects of teaching career patterns. First, we will examine the conceptualization: "I have always worked." Second, we will examine the original motivation for entering teaching. Third, we will look at the teachers' strong work commitment expressed through their efforts to reenter teaching after absences due to childrearing.

I have always worked

"Teaching has been my passion," Kate Bridges told me on her first interview. "I have felt passionately about teaching for twenty years." She may have felt passionately about it but she has not, exactly, been teaching for twenty years. Let us look in some detail at Kate's work history to try and understand how she can state that she has felt passionately about teaching, and that she has always worked, when she in fact describes, consciously, a very different sort of career pattern.

Kate recalls her work history as "teaching fairly consistently since 1960-61," but she was "in and out" with babies. "I'd come home for a year and I'd say: 'Mother in the home forever.' And then all of a sudden I was back (teaching) again." She taught in all kinds of situations, with preschool children, "disturbed kids," and even at a teachers' college in Boston.

> So I started out in the public schools in San Francisco. I taught there for two years in an inner city kind of school and I loved that. And then when the babies came along I was

> looking for part time work and I worked with disturbed kids. It seemed ideal because I had a friend with children the same ages and we were both teachers. We decided to start a nursery school and then she got pregnant again and left it to me. And I had it for two years and just loved it. There it was, my own school.

She moved to Chicago in connection with her husband's work, and taught part-time in a college education department. At that point, her teaching had "gotten increasingly almost full-time and you know any part time job is a full-time-and-a-half one anyway." Then she moved to Vista City, again for her husband's work. Her experience in Chicago, however, carries difficult memories of professional women. From her perspective: "There you are in Chicago and everybody is not only pregnant, not only getting their doctorate, they're (also) working full time and typing their husband's thesis and nursing their babies." Kate felt she wanted to make a "tremendous switch" out of the professional role and so she looked for a village-like atmosphere that would say to her, "Motherhood, Church and Home, Apple Pie." This worked "very well" for her, she said, for seven years, when she could really stay away from teaching no longer. She had gotten another part-time job working at a drug rehabilitation center developing their education program. She then got a full-time position teaching at an elementary school in Vista City. She describes her entry into this position in the following manner: "I'm going to start my teaching career and if I don't accept this job now, God knows if I will ever get my foot in the door."

Kate formally acknowledges that the beginning of her teaching career starts when she begins to teach full-time in an elementary school, since she feels herself to be an elementary schoolteacher. She is conflicted, however, because she has been interested in, involved with, and thinking about teaching for twenty years. She has also had full responsibility for the children and the home, in addition to her other tasks. Kate has physically worked hard for twenty years, and some of this work has involved teaching children. Other work has involved managing the family affairs to facilitate her working. She has not always been able, then, to translate her passion for teaching into an occupational reality. Her emphasis is placed on the content and degree of work, rather than on the formality of

position. Additionally, she experienced conflict over the appropriateness of mothers working.

Christine Bart, a colleague of Kate Bridges, described her work in a similar tone. She said that she worked "continuously" although "not always in permanent jobs." They were, however, always teaching related. She had graduated from college in 1960. She had "absolutely loved" the third grade where she had taught for a year. Then she had a baby and a year later she had twins, so she had three children under two years old. She realized that she did not want to "stay home with the kids" and they had some financial difficulties, so she hired a neighbor to watch the kids and became a permanent substitute. She was teaching four or five days a week at their neighborhood school.

Several moves and several more positions like this one later, Christine had another baby. She started teaching adult basic education in Vista City. Christine valued this particular experience highly because she learned so much about concerns of city parents. She knew that she wanted to teach in the city. After teaching adult basic education for four years, her littlest child was kindergarten age. She decided that she wanted to get back into the schools immediately because the number of positions had narrowed so greatly. "If I didn't hurry up and get in I wouldn't be able to get in at all."

Christine obtained an interview with the school board. Christine's ingenuity and foresight as well as her clear-headedness about what she wanted her career to look like got her, after some poor situations, a situation she wanted. "It was terrible down at the school board." There were ten rooms and each room, she said, had a parent, a teacher, and a school board official in it. Outside of the rooms "were all the little candidates waiting for their interviews." After the interview each candidate was told that either she would be put on a list for a job or told, "thank you, anyway."

While Christine did get a letter, she said to herself, "You know, how is anybody going to know who I am just because I am on a list. There's no way I am going to get to the head of this list." So, in August of that year she called up the office of elementary education and told the secretary that she wanted an appointment with the director. The secretary asked,

"Is this about a job?" "No," Christine replied, "This is personal." As she said to me, however, "Of course it was about a job, but if I told her that, I would never have gotten an interview."

Christine went to the director's office:

> I laid out the situation to him. I said, "Look, I'm a really good teacher; if you hire me, I'll be one of the best teachers that you have. I know that you're not going to know who I am and I want you to see my face and to think of me when you're thinking of people to hire for jobs."

When the director called her with a position that involved substituting for a teacher who would be out of the classroom for two months, Christine refused to take it. She explained, "Would you really call me if something permanent came up during the time I was in that classroom? I don't think so." Five days after school started that year he called her up again with another offer. A kindergarten teacher in a city school had a nervous breakdown, leaving the pupils in a terrible situation. He told her it would take a "good teacher" six months to get the class recovered from the damage the teacher had accomplished in two days. Would she take the job? "Look," he told her, "I really need you to do it. I'm not asking you to do this for yourself. I'm asking you to do this for me. I really need it as a favor." So, Christine said she would take the position. Though she "had a wonderful year," she did not get rehired for the position the next year due to an effort to integrate teachers as well as students in schools. She was replaced by a minority woman. She did, however, get an excellent position as a first grade teacher at Vista City Elementary School. She got it because the director of elementary education remembered her face very well indeed. Unlike Kate Bridges, however (and they were both the same age), Christine Bart never experienced conflict over whether she "ought" to work. As she said, "I never felt bad about working when my kids were little. It was never a moral issue with me."

Both of these examples are drawn from the work histories of women who are highly committed to their occupations. Their patterns contrast dramatically, however, with the well-integrated, planned career path we have come to understand belongs to the professional.

These women display, however,consistent commitment to education. And of course, they have always worked.

Occupational Choice

How did the women teaching at Vista City Elementary School come to their occupations? Why did these women choose teaching? How do they explain their choices? Are they conscious of the social forces which have propelled so many women into this occupational goal. "I always wanted to teach," Jessica Bonwit told me, "ever since I was a little girl. I like to see the light go on." Christine Bart had always wanted to be a teacher because she loved working with children. Christine, as well as Jessica, came from families which maintained socially conservative values. While Christine's mother had been trained in the law, her father "absolutely would not let" her mother work after the children were born. Christine actually wanted to become a physical education teacher because she had always performed well in athletics. Her parents, however, felt that physical education was not"feminine" enough, and told her they would not pay for her college education if she went into physical education. So, she did not major in physical education.

While Kate Bridges did not decide until college that she definitely wanted to be a teacher, when she did make the decision, she described it coming to her as a "calling." She said:

> I felt that it was a calling. I mean it wasn't just a piece of work that I fell into that was good for a mother or anything. I was standing at the window of my dorm room in my junior year (in college) and I'm looking out at this beautiful garden and all of a sudden it came to me that I should be a teacher.

So she went to graduate school to get an M.A.T. degree. She went, however, not because of the intellectual experience it might offer but because it was a requirement to teach: "The only reason I thought of graduate school was that it seemed what was necessary for teaching. It wasn't that I thought, 'Ah, graduate school will lead me along certain paths.'"

While Barbara Timmitts had always known she wanted to be a teacher, it was a matter of accident where the teaching position was physically located. It happened to be Vista City because a friend of hers who also wanted to teach was planning to move to Vista City. It seemed as good a place as any to Barbara because she would at least have a friend there.

Heather Samuels had also always wanted to be a teacher, partly, she thought, because her father had been a school principal (he died when she was seven). By the time she got to college, though, she became "very interested" in acting and the theater. She had considered majoring in drama in college but felt that the people who were in drama were "too weird and flakey" for her. "They were just way out." And so she went into teaching and considers herself a "frustrated actress." The women who gave the reasons that they had always wanted to be teachers described their choices as personal ones.

"That is what girls do." Another group of women described their choices as fitting common sex role expectations for women. In their responses, in other words, they did not offer their occupational decisions simply as personal choices. Rather, they expressed understanding, as well, for how these choices fit into larger conceptualizations of women's appropriate roles.

Jennie McAuliffe, for example, said that when she went to college she really had no expectations of doing anything, because it was expected of her that she would marry and have a family. She had these expectations as well. As she described them: "When I started going to college I thought what I would end up doing is getting married and having kids. I saw myself sitting on the back porch drinking tea and smoking a cigarette. That isn't what ended up happening to me (and I don't smoke, either)." When she got to college she became a serious student because she enjoyed her work so much. She said; "Look at me. Then, I was always attracted to these safe, comfortable roles: nurse, teacher. But I think it would be really different now. Then, it just never occurred to me that someone like me could be a doctor."

When I asked Dana Barrett how she ended up in teaching she said, "Well, girls could be either nurses, secretaries, or teachers. I absolutely wouldn't be a secretary, I didn't want to be a nurse, and

the only thing left for me was to be a teacher. So that's what I became." She is aware of her conformity to sex role expectations.

Amy Michaels was not exactly certain why she had gone in to teaching, but she thought that was what she had been expected to do and it "at least seemed like something to do." She never said that she loved children. She said, "You know, women become teachers, essentially." (Interestingly, she has a reputation of being one of the finest teachers in the school.)

These women had a conceptual awareness of the effects of social values on their career choices. There had not been many expectations of them, in terms of a career, so their choice of something--anything--expressed a sense of direction which they had maintained. These women, then, had been buffeted about by social expectations for women. Though when they had made decisions about their occupational choices they may not have been aware of the narrowness of their options, they later had become more conscious of changing roles for women. As we will discuss later in this chapter, the women's movement had clearly affected how many of them evaluated teaching as an occupational choice for women.

We should add, however, that many of these women we have discussed in these two sections, had grown up in families that supported traditional sex-role stereotypes for women. That some of them worked at all is a measure of their own efforts. As we will see in this next section, their choices may also have been affected by their family's unreal expectations about their marriageability prospects or by the women's own inclinations to avoid marriage.

"I ended up in teaching." There were other reasons as well why the women at Vista City Elementary School ended up as teachers. Only one of the women, Jean Webster, said she had chosen teaching because it fit her "family schedule." Everyone else reported that she had originally gone into teaching for some other reason. Suzanne Marquette, for example, had been a probation officer, because her "real interests" lay in social work, but in that position she noticed that many of the problems the youngsters had stemmed from school truancy. She decided that if truancy was the problem, then a better place for her to be was in schoolteaching.

Like Suzanne, Bernice Smith is also unmarried. She had wanted to work when she was a young woman and because of the social values of her parents and their poverty, she did not have many opportunities open to her. Her father felt that she did not need a college education because "you don't need an education to change diapers." But he was, however, in favor of her becoming a secretary because he felt that she could work as a secretary until she had babies and changed the diapers. She was determined to attend college, however, and somehow got herself some scholarships through the Polish Scholarship Fund to attend a local four year college. She worked as a secretary the summer she graduated from high school in order to earn money for college. When she quit her job to start her freshman year (she had not yet disclosed her plans to her father), her father was very angry with her. She said he would not speak to her for three weeks. In spite of Bernice's entry into a "traditional" occupation for women, then, for her the leap required rebellion against a controlling father who saw even teaching as inappropriate for his daughter.

Maria Johnson also came from a family that upheld traditional roles for women although her ethnic background was Italian rather than Polish. She was the only girl in a family with five brothers. During high school she "somehow" got the idea that she wanted to be a social worker. Her high school counselor, however, told her that she was "definitely not college material." She was still not deterred from her goal, she reported. So she and a friend went to a local four year college by themselves and got applications to go there. They filled out the applications and both were accepted. By her senior year in college she still had not decided exactly what she wanted to be, although she still thought she wanted to be a social worker. She had always done volunteer work with kids and she was sure that she wanted to work with kids. She had "sort of decided" that adoption work would be a good area for her. But when she got around to examining some professional requirements, she discovered that the masters program for social work lasted two years, but took only one year in education. So she decided to go into teaching.

If Lisa Novak had to pinpoint the reason she went into teaching, she might say it was financial. She had majored in English at a university. When she graduated she was not sure just what she wanted to do,

and since a good friend of hers was moving to Vista City, she moved also. Lisa got a job working in some kind of business concern where she made telephone calls to advertise a product. She found the work so boring that she hated it. She also said, "It just didn't have any value." She heard about the urban teacher preparation program at Vista City University. Because it involved a half-time teaching position and because she was "low on money" she figured that this half-time work would enable her to go to school. She decided to enter the program and was accepted. She reported that her first teaching experiences were excellent. In retrospect, then, Lisa's reasons for entering teaching were not just remunerative. She also wanted an occupation that seemed to carry some social value.

Josephine Keller was the music teacher at Vista City Elementary. She went into teaching because she was interested in classical music. Since she always wanted to be involved with classical music, she reported, she decided to be a music teacher. She went to Vista City University but "hated" their "music ed" program, so she majored in Fine Arts instead, which enabled her to concentrate on music. It was only after she graduated that she took her education courses. She said that she is interested in teaching kids that "there is music in all that we do."

Career motivation did not seem related to one's reputation as a teacher. Those, for example, who had become teachers because they had always wanted to work with children, did not have better reputations in the school than some of the teachers who seemed to have more "accidently" fallen into teaching rather than into some other occupation that was accessible to women. It should be noted, however, that some of the women who came from conservative families had needed to act defiantly in order to become even teachers. We will see this pattern again appear when we describe the defiance some teachers exhibit in their return to work after childrearing.

The Commitment to Work: After Childbearing

Seven of the women I had interviewed at Vista City Elementary School had stopped working for various periods of time after they had children. Of these seven, one had stopped while she was pregnant because the school district in Vermont, where she was teaching,

did not allow pregnant women to teach during this period (the early sixties).

Two teachers told me that they were planning to leave teaching for a year when they had babies. Both of these women had faced tremendous difficulties having children. One teacher had ten miscarriages before she carried to term (she was in her ninth month when I interviewed her, and she had spent much time out of the classroom during her pregnancy). The other teacher adopted a child during the research project and wanted to spend one year at home with him. After the year she then returned to teaching.

During interviews four women described their intense desire to return to the classroom after a period at home with young children. Another woman who had never worked at all before having children also wanted to work, and like some of the other women, developed a strategy that would enable her to have a full-time job. In this section we examine the intense desire to work that the teachers reported in their interviews. We focus particularly on the strategies the women employed to overcome their husbands' objections.

Sylvia Richardson was in her fifties. She had taught for five years in the seventh grade before taking a nine year hiatus to raise her children, "and wait until my youngest was solidly in school." She has been teaching for nine years since she returned to work.

She told me that her husband had not wanted her to return to work because he liked having her at home. She said, "You know, we're not for this women's lib thing." She must have equated the woman wanting to work outside the home with feminism. Somehow she began to do a little "subbing." While she was thinking of doing this one of her old friends who taught gave her a little advice: "Listen," her friend said, "Don't go and sub in the seventh grade because the kids are really different from when you were there." She told me that she then decided that, "Gee,if seventh and eighth graders were really violent, and if it was going to be just a terribly difficult situation for her every day, then I'd better pick a group that wasn't going to be this demanding." Then her husband would not be able to say to her, "We don't need this aggravation. Come on home." What enabled her to change from subbing, which her husband did not classify as a

full-time position, to full-time teaching was her availability. As she began subbing every day, her husband finally relented on the full-time teaching position. "At least we'll always know where to find you," he told her.

Sylvia tried to describe how she and her husband made decisions about issues. She said that if they both have things that they want to do, whoever feels the strongest ends up having his or her way, and the other party compromises. I wondered how this related to her comments about her desire to return to work and her disassociation from feminism. I asked her, "So which party felt stronger in this case, your husband?" "No," she responded, "actually I really wanted to work, but with the ladies these days they always want to do their own thing." If everyone does his or her own thing in a family, then the family suffers, so someone has to "give in" and take responsibility for the family. She said, "It's really hard for someone to just stay home and take care of a kid and do all the housework because you feel terrible about yourself. But on the other hand, the family needs attending to."

I asked her how she felt about going back to work and she said that she "just loved it." She said that working outside of the home is "actually much easier" than working inside the home because if you are a housewife you get involved in all kinds of volunteer projects. She was involved in the boy scouts, the girl scouts, the junior scouts, "the this, the that, and the other thing." People always called her up and asked her to "bake forty cakes for the cake sale" and of course she would do it. "When you're home," she said, "you work just as hard but you don't get any pay for it and you spread youself too thin."

Several important issues emerge here. First, we must notice the strategy that Sylvia Richardson employed which eased her re-entry into teaching. She chose a grade level that would not be so "difficult" as junior high so that she could leave her work problems behind her when she came home. Sylvia portrays an interesting example of how women may strategize to accomplish their goals when they do not want to face sanctions for rule-breaking.

It is also important to note that Sylvia used every opportunity to disassociate herself from feminism. At the same time, she shared many feminists' appraisals of the damage to self-esteem that were the

tolls of many full-time housewives. I suggest that this example is typical of many teachers' solutions to problems: they often seek the individual resolution rather than a change in the status quo.

While the strategy that Sylvia Richardson chose seemed to have reaped many benefits for her, the costs other women must pay are sometimes higher. Take the case of Jessica Bonwit. She had also stopped working when she had children. While she was having her children she started her own home day care program. Six to eight kids would come to her home, and she did "all the things that the kids would get in nursery school" She reported that she had started the home day care program "to keep from going crazy with things like the laundry." She went on to say that "something went click after six years" and she knew that she had to get back to teaching in a school.

Her husband, however,is not one to share in the work. Jessica's arrangement was that her husband's life would not change when she went back to work. She said, "He didn't mind so much when I went back to work because his life didn't change at all from before I was working to when I went back to work, but he knew that I had a real professional interest in teaching and also that I was really happy doing it." Perhaps Jessica was prepared in some way for a marriage of this type. Her own upbringing did not emphasize her worth in a world of men. She wishes, for example, that her husband would show more interest in her work, but she is prepared for his distance:

> I was raised in an Italian family where the boys were valued much more highly than the girls. So with my brother, they always listened to him with both ears. But with me they only listened with one ear. It was like, "What were you saying?" So I got in the habit of only talking things over with myself."

Jessica's price for her full-time work is to continue her full-time housework as well as work full-time at teaching. She carries resentment against her husband, but she feels that she can live with the situation. Besides, she loves her teaching. The impact of her choice will only emerge in the future.

Carrie Amundsen had never worked before she had children, but like the other two women whose situations we have just described, she had to develop a strategy in order to join the work force as a full-time employee. Though Carrie is in her fifties, she has only been teaching for ten years. Her husband had never wanted her to work. In fact, she confided in me, she almost did not marry him because of his views on working women. She referred to him as "the original male chauvinist pig." She had to find a way to ease herself into the work market. She said, "Here's how I did it."

"Actually," she continued, "I wasn't even planning to go back to work. I had never gotten my bachelor's degree, so I went and took a course in math at the university." She took it, she said, with no goal in mind except for "enrichment," but she had loved the course and "ended up taking some more courses." When she had taken as much math as she could, she "somehow made some connections" with watching her children in school learning how to read and realizing that there were some kids having struggles learning how to read. Further, there were special reasons for these struggles. Her interest in this was so high that when she finished her undergraduate degree, she got a masters degree in special education.

By this time she had gained experience in schools and she wanted to put it to some good use. In the area where she was living at the time, a specialist in her area was starting a program and he asked her if she would work in it. She told him, "My husband will never let me go back to work." He responded, "Let me worry about your husband." So they "worked out a deal" where she would say to her husband that she would just try it out for one year. And she loved it. At the end of that year she "weaseled" her way into another and another year.

It is apparent in the cases of these three women that their desire to work full-time outside the home compelled them to develop strategies to overcome their husbands' resistance to this. The tactics they developed enabled them to return to the labor market. Whether their desire to work is directly related to their desire to be with children in the classroom is unclear from this data. They may have wanted to return to the working world. They were familiar with education, and its schedule allowed them to meet their

husbands' needs. At the same time they may have held specific interests in education. The data does not reveal this. Carrie Amundsen's situation does suggest, however, that her interests in education propelled her toward a goal of teaching.

In the next two examples, the women's desire to return to work after time spent with family was high, but the need to develop strategies to do so was not present. Kate had spent time at home after her family had moved to the Vista City area. While she describes these years at home as basically "mellow" ones, September was always a poignant time for her: "Every year when school would start I would think, 'Oh my God, how many more years will it be before I'm back?' And I just lived for the moment; literally, just lived for the moment." She began working part-time again developing an education program for a drug rehabilitation center. "I loved it and realized I just couldn't put off this stuff any more. And I really had to get back in-- for my own psyche."

This period in Kate's life was the mid-seventies when she saw the job market closing in and teaching positions becoming harder to locate. She worried that she might not be able to get a job if she waited too long. "I had never worried about it before. I always had felt that when I needed to go back it would be there waiting for me. Now I thought it might not be my own schedule I'd have to go by. Maybe it would be someone else's that I'd have to operate on." So Kate got a full-time teaching job, "for all those reasons and mostly from some inner desire."

Kate's plans did not, however, fit in very conveniently with her husband's. For years her husband, Richard, had been planning to go to Europe when he got leave from his architectural firm. The closer the leave came upon them, however, the more anxious the family members, except the husband, got. Kate reports this difficult period:

> The kids didn't want to go. They were happy and so forth, and they were now getting along and getting good grades and didn't want to be uprooted for a year. And I worried about just being "the wife" in a foreign country with three children who didn't want to be there. Well, Richard wrote and read and just played out his own lovely agenda. I thought, "This

> is Pittsville." So then I said to Richard that I'd go for half a year, that I couldn't make it for a full year. Suddenly we were in tremendous trouble. Our marriage was just like this up to that point (Kate holds up right hand with two fingers intertwined). Then I said that I couldn't go at all. Then we fell apart. The shit hit the fan, so to speak.

Kate became a little confused over the exact chronology of events. She was certain, however, that when her husband took the kids to Europe for five weeks, she had just started her teaching position. "I broke up a fight in the classroom and ended up with my wrist in a cast for three weeks. And Richard at that very moment went off to Europe with the children. And I thought, 'Wonderful, I'm an independent woman. I can cope. I can drive these eighteen miles with my arm in a cast, turning around the steering wheel.' I felt great, just great." Kate and her husband also worked through the difficulties they faced in their marriage to rebuild a strong though rebalanced relationship.

Like Kate, Josephine Keller was not quite ready to take a position teaching music at a local school. But she had to choose because a job that she considered "ideal" had suddenly become available:

> I can tell you that I always thought that I would stay at home with my children until they were both in school. But when this job came up last year, I just decided that I had to take it. There couldn't be a more ideal school for me. And now, I just can't tell you how happy I am. My kids are doing just wonderfully, I love working again, and I think it's better for everybody all around. I'm happy, and the kids are very happy.

Josephine's transition back to full-time work appeared easy for her. She said that she had thought, in rearranging family life, that she and her husband would have to "deal with specifics." She thought that responsibilities for specific chores would have to be divided up and closely monitored. They never did have to do this though, she reported. Her husband "just stepped in and took over a lot of responsibilities."

Attitudes toward the work/home relationships also caused little problem for Josephine. She did not seem to experience the same moral conflicts over parenting and working that other teachers, like Kate, experienced. As Josephine saw it, "I think that many working mothers think that people who stay home with their kids sit and eat bon-bons all day. Women who don't work think that mothers who work are ruining their children's lives. For me, I always knew that staying home would only be for a little while, so I valued it." Both groups, in her eyes, hold misperceptions of the other group.

While the women who strategized about reentering the job market ranged in age between 35 and 55, younger women did not appear immune from this pattern. Gwen Farley was 27 years old and not yet married to her boyfriend. They discussed marriage plans frequently, however, and Gwen knew and would accede to her husband's views on mothering. She said that while her boyfriend is very interested in her work and always asks every day when he calls what kind of a day it was. "he doesn't want his kids passed around from the babysitter's, to the nursery schools and daycare centers when they're young." "He feels very strongly," she said, "that when kids are young they need their mothers." She will quit her job, she told me, and take care of the kids for that period of time. Then, when the kids are back in school, he says it is "okay" for the mother to go back to work part time. So that is what Gwen will do.

Clearly there are differences in the means by which the teachers attempted to resolve their problems. Three of the teachers chose tactics to maneuver their way into teaching without having to do ideological battle with their husbands. They did not even see this as an issue of ideology, although they may have seen it as an issue of rights. Another teacher did get involved in direct confrontation with her husband and was successful. A third woman re-entered the job market with her husband's support and benefitted from his new participation in household affairs. With all of these women, however, their desire to return to schoolteaching was high.

When do individuals have to develop strategies to accomplish their goals? They must do so primarily when they cannot be forthright about their purposes. We think of politicians, corporate executives, football players as among those who most frequently develop

strategies (whether of a political nature, in corporate gamesmanship, or on the playing field). In other instances people employ strategies to accomplish their goals when being straightforward about their purposes is not enough to achieve success. In this instance, we might think of community organizers who may choose to state their goals, but at the same time develop tactics to accomplish them as well.

Women have also been described as employers of tactics to accomplish their goals because they lack power in the society. In the cases just described, the teachers chose to develop strategies to enable them to return to work against their husbands' wishes. Either, they did not wish to directly challenge their husbands on the issue, or they surmised that direct challenge would not be successful. They looked for an individual resolution to the public trouble in American society of sex stereotyping or gender discrimination (Mills, 1959). Their commitment to work was high. Their awareness of how to accomplish their goals facilitated their return to work. In the next section we will continue our examination of the intersection of work and career through the study of teachers' idealism in their work expectations.

IDEALISM, WORK AND CAREERS

In our examination of the intersection of work and careers we have looked at the teachers' understanding of their work patterns, we have studied their motivations for entering teaching, and we have discussed their return to work after the child-bearing years. Once they are working, however, what are their expectations about how their own efforts will shape their career development. How do women who teach elementary school negotiate their visions about what a teaching position should be like with what they find? How do teachers who want to do well in their work think that their efforts will help them?

In this section I will suggest that some of the women who taught at Vista City Elementary School brought a high level of idealism about their occupation to their work. These expectations caused them to work hard to accomplish their goals. It contributed to their excellent reputation as teachers. At the same time, the work setting brought frustrations because it

did not match their conceptions of how they wanted to work. Some of these teachers with high expectations focused more determinedly on their work, isolating them from other adults in the building. Not all teachers reflected this pattern, however, for some brought their idealism to other aspects of the job, such as committee work. In neither case, however, did teachers' high commitment (or idealism) further their careers. Primarily, few opportunities for advancement are available. Idealism caused teachers to focus on the quality of work and work setting.

Opportunities for teachers to move to administrative positions are limited, therefore few teachers face the situation of deciding what to do when they are offered one. Those who are faced with such a decision, however, reveal the idealism about teaching that other teachers often exhibit in their daily work. When Barbara Timmitts was first offered the position of instructional specialist she turned it down. She felt that she hadn't taught long enough at the time to be able to do the job well. When she was offered it the second time, she took it, not, she said, because she was certain that she would do excellently at it, but because she wanted the job and was fearful that she would not be offered it a third time.

If we examine how Barbara Timmitts thinks about her job offer, we notice that her major concern is whether or not she will do an excellent job, not how this position will serve her career advancement. It is this orientation to work which I refer to as idealistic because how one does or can do a particular piece of work is always measured against the person's ideal concept of how the job ought to be done. The teachers focused on the content of the occupation rather than on the occupation as a link to other occupational choices. They made their choices on the basis of quality of performance rather than on its career value. Put more abstractly, we see these teachers thinking of how they served the occupation rather than of how the occupation could serve them. This way of looking at their work was not undertaken from the perspective of innocence.

It is not as if Barbara Timmitts is naive about work patterns. She described herself as a person very committed to her work. Before she had children, she said, "If I ever had to choose at the time between my husband and my work, my husband always knew that my

work came first for me." Having children changed that orientation for Barbara. She had been out of work for only two months after the births of each of her two children, and reported that she had been anxious to return to work (she had never considered stopping work after childbirth for reasons of finances, tenure and personal commitment to working). Now, however, she had dropped her heavy involvement in committee work. She had spent many evenings at various curriculum committee meetings, and she said that she "loved coming back to the school in the evening. It was no bit of difficulty at all." She had also served on a number of advisory committees, and was involved in other activities that demanded weekend and evening commitments. She had given up these interests in order to manage family and work life.

Christine Bart shared certain characteristics with Barbara Timmitts. Like Barbara, Christine had worked when her children were small. While Christine does not have an administrative position, like Barbara she has played a strong role among teachers at Vista City Elementary School and on district-wide committees as well. Like Barbara, her sense of idealism shapes the commitments she takes on. When I asked Christine about her leadership goals, she said to me that she thought she would not be interested in being a school principal. From her perspective:

> I never take charge of committees or anything like that unless it is something that I really want to do because I'm clear about my priorities. I know that I do things whole-heartedly or not at all. I'm happy to co-chair things, but I'm not going to do something that I know is going to take twenty hours of my time unless it is something that is very important to me.

In addition, Bart is not so sure that what administrators do is effective. She shares the view of many, many teachers, that one cannot be effective or productive as an administrator and that those positions waste valuable talent. She made her point in relation to the work of Barbara Timmitts. As she said, "My priority is in here with these kids. You look at someone like Barbara Timmitts. Barbara Timmitts is about the best teacher in this school and she was promoted to pushing a cart around the

halls. She walks around with requisition slips and a pencil in her hand. Now what is that?" Children are the core of the work.

Amelia Dickenson had directed the gifted program before she had been transferred out of the administrative position back into the classroom. When I asked her what it was like being back in the classroom full-time, she replied, "It's really great; I just love it. You really feel like you're accomplishing something."

Teachers' commitment to their work, their attempt to execute their jobs close to their ideal conception of it, comes through during daily work as well. While teachers often complained to each other in the teachers' room and to me as well in interviews about the small number of breaks they had during a day, many teachers gave up their breaks in service to their teaching. Roberta Blake, for example, said that she had no free periods during the day, not even lunch. She explained that she believes in mainstreaming, so instead of having her class (one of the special education classes in the building) go out in a group to "the specials" (art, music, gym), she sends them out a few at a time with different typical classes. Her beliefs, then cause more work for her. As she put it, "Afterall, that's why this class is here--to be mainstreamed."

Kate Bridges rarely goes to the teachers' room to eat her lunch. It is not just that the smoke bothers her. She feels, rather, that if she can return papers that her pupils have completed in the morning to them in the same afternoon, the educational results will be better. "I have so many papers that have accumulated over the morning. Why not correct a paper and give instant feedback. If you could pass back the paper and have the kids working on it as soon as they return from lunch, I mean the mileage on it is infinitely more. It is taking it out of your skin though. So I'm sitting here eating a sandwich and correcting these papers and I also know that it's better education (and I'm not having to correct that set of papers at night)." Kate sees it as a "tradeoff," however, becuase remaining in her room isolates her from colleagial relationships she wants.

The sixth grade team also gave up the opportunity to take a break during the day. They had asked the administration to schedule all their students' "specials" at 8:15 in the morning (school started at 8 o'clock) so that they could spend the rest of the day with their students. They said that since they "switched" for different subjects, they did not have "a lot of time with the students." They wanted as much time with their students as they could get.

At Vista City Elementary, these "breaks" did not amount to very much time. Teachers got three "free" periods a week while their students went to the specials of art, music, and gym. It is noteworthy that the day was not structured, these teachers felt, to maximize the education of their students. They reported that they felt able to reach their goals only when they sacrificed some of their planning time. This sacrifice did not mean that teachers wanted to be without breaks. Complaints over the right scheduling of their day were rampant. Difficulties in going to the bathroom were only some of the problems mentioned. One teacher even wryly compared herself to a police officer, noting that when the police officer is on duty, she at least gets to "ride around in a patrol car."

Sacrificing time was not the only way in which teachers attempted to live closely to their ideal of good teaching. Their idealism was expressed in many ways. One teacher had taken a tutoring job the summer before because she wanted the particular experience she would gain even though the pay was terrible. She said, "And I really learned a lot." Jessica Bonwit turned down a teaching assignment, when she came back to teaching after time at home with her children, because it was not close enough to her minimum requirements for a good teaching situation. She did not mean a situation that would be easy for her, but that would enable her to work at even a near distance to her image of the good educational situation. A group of teachers on the school renovation committee met many nights (including weekend nights) until eleven o'clock to accomplish their tasks. They had earlier sat through long meetings with parents to listen to their views, even though many of them felt that parents' role on the committee should only come into play after the teachers, administrators, and architects had met first.

Amy Michaels, a special education teacher, had "hated" the values about special education at the school where she had previously taught. She said that the attitudes the teachers and administrators had expressed toward the children in her classes had finally caused her to plan to quit teaching. Luckily, her transfer application was successful and she moved to Vista City Elementary where the values are much more in line with her own.

Sandra Miller gave up her lunchtimes and many afternoons after school for a month to do her "levels testing" because she wanted to give the tests to her pupils "when there was nobody else around." That way, she felt, she would not have to cut her reading groups to give the tests.

A teaching assistant gave up the tenure she had gained in this district because the special child with whom she worked was being transferred to another district. She had not wanted the child to be transferred because it was the middle of the year. Her attempts to postpone the move until the next year had been unsuccessful. She had been told that "this was a unique case." She wished, then, that they would make a "unique" exception in her case and get her tenure in the district to which she was moving. She had "chosen" to go, however, because she did not want to jeopardize all that she had gained this year with her student, and it was most important to her to finish the work she had begun. Even though the school to which she was going had no program for the child, she was determined to make mainstreaming a successful experience again for him: "We're going to make this work--even if they don't have a program there, we'll make it successful. No matter what, we will make a good program for Jacob there."

These teachers focused their energies on the content of the work, not on its use to them for upward mobility. Hence their major frustrations came, not when their hopes for advancement were crushed, but rather when they were forced to make compromises which they felt endangered their educational vision.

If we look at this tension as a contrast, the case of Jennie McAuliffe is revealing. During my first interview with Jennie, we were sitting in the teachers' lounge with another teacher from her team. She had practically flown over to me from the doorway

to tell me how much she had liked what I said when I introduced my study to the teachers at the faculty meeting a week earlier. Jennie, the other teacher from her team, and I began to discuss teachers, pupils, her team, and the school. Jennie participated fully in the discussion. She sat on the edge of her seat as we talked, her face was animated, her tone of voice expressive. Her hands gestured continually as she talked. During the conversation, Sarah Jacobs, her team member, said that some of the teachers who did not have tenure were afraid to state their feelings to the parents because they felt it would jeopardize their chances for tenure. Sarah, as she reported, did not have this fear.

I turned then to Jennie to ask her about her tenure situation, and her entire demeanor changed. She sat back in her seat, her face developed a lazy, distant expression, and her whole body relaxed. She was working, she said, to put her husband through medical school, she was not on any tenure ladder, and she had no idea of what she would do when her husband finished school, and little concern about it. Her future was up in the air, and she was not worried about it.

I wondered at first about this seeming discrepancy between Jennie's seriousness about her work, her enthusiasm about the content of what she did, and her seeming detachment from long-range involvement in teaching. My understanding of the discrepancy was based, however, on a lack of data. It was not that Jennie was unconcerned about her tenure in teaching, but rather that she did not have tenure and felt stress from her situation. Confident about the content of teaching, she could bring enthusiasm and involvement to it. Worried and insecure about her position as a teacher, she felt and displayed more symptoms of helplessness. The occupational structure had disheartened Jennie.

Other teachers reacted similarly to this type of situation. Vista City Elementary experienced more uncertainty than other elementary schools in the city among its teachers. Pregnancy, retirements and advancement had caused more vacancies at Vista City the previous year, which were presently filled on a temporary basis. Other schools in the city, following a more typical national pattern, were almost fully tenured in their staffs and thus experienced little

movement. The budgetary problems of the school district had changed the ways in which positions were delegated for the following year. Consequently, teachers without tenure, teachers like Jennie McAuliffe, worried about their positions.

Jessica Bonwit, another untenured teacher, worried as well. When, on the last day of school, Jessica still did not know whether she would be able to return the following year, her anxiety mounted. "The job status situation is so disheartening for me. I just think it is devastating to teachers not to know where they are going to be next year. It's a terrible way to treat us."

Josephine Keller, another untenured teacher, reacted similarly. She had been assigned to be a "TA Sub," a teaching assistant substitute, for the following year. This designation was a bureaucratic maneuver the central school administration had developed to avoid paying unemployment benefits to teachers during the summer during this period of retrenchment. She exclaimed that, "A TA Sub is something I would never be!" She said that it was really frustrating for her because if she did not want that position as a TA Sub, she could never get unemployment and she thought "that is a really rip-off way to take care of teachers." She concluded wryly that, "If I don't get this job back, I'll go to _____ (a large heating unit manufacturer in Vista City) and with open arms, say 'Here I am. I'm yours. Please pay me $40,000 a year.'" Josephine Keller, Jessica Bonwit and Jennie McAuliffe were not alienated from thinking about their career patterns. They were, rather, fearful about their job prospects for the coming year and thus estranged from a system that did not, they felt, treat them with dignity. They sometimes wondered whether professionals of higher standing, like doctors or lawyers, would "be left hanging all summer" waiting for confirmation of their positions. Bruce Pickett, a school psychologist at Archduke Elementary School sympathized with the vulnerability teachers feel. Discussing why teachers seem to need so much support, and were often so threatened by critical feedback, he said:

> How can you expect that if you treat teachers absolutely terribly that they will respond any differently? You cut a million teachers out, you expect more of them each year,

> you move them around from school to school, you offer them contracts which say they will not be rehired next year and then during the summer you give them a contract to rehire them. All that creates vulnerability and makes them feel terrible.

In this section we have discussed the high level of idealism about their work observed among the teachers of Vista City Elementary School. The teachers we have discussed wanted to be honest, sincere, and meet their own priorities. This idealism led some of them to reject administrative positions because they felt a principalship demanded too many compromises with one's ideals. It led others to make sacrifices of time that often took a personal toll. In fact, the principal said on many occasions that some of the teachers worked too hard, gave too much of themselves to their work for their own good. She was worried that they would "burn out." This idealism is perhaps symbolized by the language one teacher used to describe her entry into teaching. When she first started working with children, she said, there was a "marriage" between her and the children. It is this kind of relationship that many teachers sought. Some of them think that they will find it with high achievers, some with lower achievers. The focus, however, is on children, and how to serve them, not on how one's career will serve one's self.

The teachers' idealism about their work also affected their aspirations about how worthwhile it would be to be an administrator. The teachers at Vista City Elementary rarely respected the administrators. They were particularly critical of those in the central offices. Staff development sessions were one example of their criticism. They also had harsh words for the special education administration, criticizing them for being out of touch with the school staffs, and incapable of handling difficult problems. From their perspective, it was usually only mediocre teachers who became principals and central school administrators. Since the hassles and demands were also so great there, they could see little reason to hanker after these positions. They were not so certain that it would enhance their status. Their idealistic understanding of the content of the work alienated them from aspiring to administration. This suggests, I maintain, that we must resist viewing teachers who do not aspire to administrative positions as "aborted administrators."

THE TEACHING REPUTATION: A VIEW FROM INSIDE

The women's movement has participated in the creation of rising expectations among women for job opportunities with higher status, and better pay. Teachers have been caught up in this tide as other women have. One feature of social life which undermines the willingness of these women to identify proudly with their occupational role is the social devaluation of teaching. This social evaluation is an issue even to women who rejected the women's movement. In this section we look at teachers' understanding of the social devaluation of teaching.

This phenomena is not, of course, singular to Vista City. Articles in NEWSWEEK, TIME, and THE NEW YORK TIMES have noted the low social esteem in which teachers are held. Research on women studying to be teachers at Yale suggests that while the students were interested in the program, they "dreaded the 'intellectual insult of being undergraduate education majors'" (Levine, 1968, in Sarason, 1982: 65). Additionally, "these young women are made keenly aware in a variety of ways that in a social setting whose value hierarchy is based upon advanced scholarship, people who are going to be high school teachers command little respect" (Sarason, 1982: 65-66). Elementary schoolteaching would rank even lower at Yale. After all, the estimated average elementary schoolteacher's salary is lower than a plumber's (Grant, forthcoming).

When teachers at Vista City Elementary talked about what teaching looked like to outsiders, they usually meant the general public. On specific occasions, however, they would describe an event organized by the cental school administration and complain that the activity's lack of quality revealed central administration's low image of teachers. In this section we will look at both of these areas.

Many teachers shared Jessica Bonwit's assertion that, "teachers usually get a lot of bad press." One aspect of this perspective is that the public does not understand how difficult a job teaching is.

> How difficult it is to be a teacher. Teachers are underpaid and undervalued. How many people end the day after working nine to five at _____ Corporation and go home and just sob because their work was so hard? Nobody understands what it's like to work around children all day, how hard it is and what it does to you. (Bonwit)
>
> Teaching looks easy from the outside. I went into the bank the other day a little after 2 (o'clock) and the teller said to me, "Ha, how do you like that-- 2 o'clock and here you are out and my wife has to stay downtown and work until 5:00." I said, "Yeah, but you don't know what I do all day." That's what it looks like from the outside: the hours, the summer vacation--and people don't know what it's like to be responsible for thirty kids for six hours every day. It's very, very difficult. (Bart)
>
> People emphasize the bad part of teaching too much these days. You know, it's hard enough teaching a class when you don't have discipline problems. That's what the public doesn't understand. (Webster)

These views represent a common understanding about teachers, however; they are not unique to women. LEARNING Magazine, for example, has a popular poster depicting an exhausted teacher sprawled in her chair at the end of a day with the caption, "Nobody ever said it would be easy."

The teachers at Vista City felt resentful because they were often uncertain that the public viewed them as serious workers. Teaching well, as Jean Webster said, is challenging even when the class is not filled with discipline problems. The teachers at Vista City did not want teaching to be undervalued (or underpaid). They wanted the recognition that they worked diligently at challenging jobs and they wanted the status that such a reevaluation would bring. They did not always believe that the status of elementary schoolteaching was related to the fact that work with young children is categorized as women's work. Other reasons offered for the lower status of teaching included the view that teachers were the "powerless" kind of public servants (in contrast to "politicians").

Additionally, they argued that the many "mediocre" people in teaching detracted from the reputations of those who were "more professional," i.e., better at their work. Some teachers did suggest, however, that working with children was not socially valued, and that consequently, it was difficult to "make money" in teaching, or to have people value their work.

This problem was exacerbated for many teachers by the reinforcement of this view in their own central administration. Many teachers felt that "downtown's" view of teachers' competence was evidenced by the low level of the staff development programs. In one example, a teacher described a meeting of all elementary schoolteachers on the importance of writing in the curriculum. At the start of the session a new curriculum was handed out to the "1000 or so" teachers sitting in the audience and they were told, "Now, open to the table of contents." So, they all opened to the table of contents and the speaker "read down the table of contents." After he had finished that, he read the fourth grade level as an example of the program. The teachers, at this point, were "beside (themselves) with wrath." From the view of a member of the audience, "downtown" must see them as incompetent, or why else would these staff development sessions be so bad?

This view was echoed around the school. Jessica Bonwit, for example, stated that good inservice was very important for teachers. It was a time for "stimulation" and "rejuvenation." Because she took her job seriously, she said, she wanted these sessions to stimulate her. "We need to use our inservice time well to get new ideas." She also commented on the disasterous session in the fall when the administrative staffer had read from the writing curriculum. In response to a question about why she thought those running the inservice program had treated them in that manner, she said:

> We obviously know how to read. What is it? They think we can't read? They don't respect us. Part of the reason for that is that people who go into administration are usually neither good teachers themselves nor like teachers very much. And they run the show!

Christine Bart had her own reasons about why the superintendent's office behaved as it did. As she

said, "They have absolutely no idea what we think or do in the classroom. It's just terrible. They're so out of touch."

That their top administrators did not seem to respect them added insult to injury to these teachers. The values about women's roles that the women's movement had raised also affected their evaluation of teaching. Amy Michaels, for example, said that the women's movement made her more conscious that teaching had low status as a profession and that she could do something "better" like being in "business management" or administration where the "pay is more and the status is better." She felt uncomfortable that people looked down on women who taught, "now that there is an impetus for women to do more."

Josephine Keller felt torn between understanding this evaluation and enjoying it. She said that she knew that there was "very little status in teaching" and if she were choosing a career again, she doesn't know if she would want to be a teacher. As she put it, "It's a funny thing. I'm caught in this. I love my work: I love teaching, but I wish that teaching had more recognition and that people cared more about it."

Teachers handle their dilemma in different ways. Some try to convince themselves that their self-evaluations are the most important. Jessica Bonwit, for example, said, "Other people don't consider us professionals like doctors or lawyers. But I do!" Others may complain and wish for an alternative as Kate Bridges does: "I want respect from others about what I do. You know, I'm in my forties now, and I know I can do this well, and I want other people to value what I do." Still others choose to argue with those who denigrate the demands of the occupation. Lisa Novak, for example, reported that she has often said to friends of hers who criticize the short hours and long vacations teaching offers:

> You get to go to the bathroom whenever you want to. If you're not feeling so great one day, or if you're feeling down in the dumps, you can take a two hour lunch. We don't get any of those things. We don't have the flexibility to arrange our lives that way. When we're in bad spirits, we still have to come in and be 100% there for the kids.

Other teachers choose a more drastic remedy. They do not disclose their occupational role in certain situations. Carrie Amundsen, for example, affirmed her knowledge that people did not value "at all" the work of teachers. So sometimes, she said, when she is with a group of highly educated or "socialite kinds of people" (and her husband's job means she often has to interact with such groups), she often does not tell people what she does. She said when "people make terrible comments about teachers, the last thing I'm going to do is tell everybody I'm a teacher." She complained that she often heard "parents of this type" say things like, "Most of the children in the class are smarter than the teacher." Jean Webster, a woman who clearly stated she had chosen teaching to fit her family schedule, told a similar story. When she and her husband go to the local grocery store to shop together her husband (a department head at a local high school) always "tells everybody that he is a teacher," while she is more reluctant to do so. Jean was hesitant in sharing her reasons for this and would only say, "Oh, he manages to take any opening he can in a conversation to let everybody know he's a teacher, and I don't want everybody to know."

Sociologists have suggested that work no longer provides people with the "firm profile" it once did (Berger, 1964). To say, for example, "I am an electroencephalograph technician," does not mean anything to most people. The teachers I studied, however, had just the opposite problem. Knowing the social evaluation of their work, they sometimes chose to say nothing in order to hide their line of work rather than be pigeonholed by the profile their career title suggested. This is especially true for women since feminism had created a tide of rising expectations for women.

If many of the younger teachers had to choose again, they reported, they would choose an occupation with higher status and better pay. They would do this, they said, not because they disliked working with children. Many described themselves as "loving it." Rather, they would choose another occupation because they wanted the status and the pay. If they could attain these working with children, they would not want to reject teaching. The social devaluation of work with young children contributed to many teachers' desire to distance themselves from their occupational role.

CONCLUSION

The intersection between career and work is complex. We suggest here, however, that teachers at Vista City illustrated a high level of commitment to and interest in their work. These findings seem to contradict the application of Kanter's depiction of "moving" and "stuck" positions as Wheatley (1979) has applied them to teaching. If we look at teachers as "stuck," as Wheatley suggests, then we frame a view of career that excludes being an excellent teacher as a goal. This study only discusses the elementary school level, and Wheatley discusses high school and elementary schools together. Kanter's model of organizations, an extremely effective one, was developed in the corporation, not in the elementary school. The corporate career represents a male model of career; it is a male world to which women have only recently been invited. The elementary school, however, has been a female world for many years--at the teaching level, that is. If we are to develop a career model that accurately describes a career pattern in a sex-segregated setting that is not simply the wholesale transfer of a model more befitting male power patterns, we must generate a pattern that includes women's understanding of their patterns. The idea that women in teaching are "stuck" becomes an obstructing rather than enlightening view.

We must continually emphasize the importance of women's access to leadership positions. We must encourage women to think of themselves as potentially effective leaders. At the same time, however, we must resist viewing women in teaching as "aborted administrators."

CHAPTER 4

"A BASIC FACT OF HUMAN LIFE"
--AUTONOMY IN TEACHERS' LIVES

> That is another one of the issues: feeling that you don't have control. That's a basic fact of human life. A plumber has control over his job--he comes when he can and he leaves when he goes out, saying, "Sorry, I have to get something from my trunk." He's gone for three hours; nobody questions about how he's going to do his job.

Comparing the situation of teachers to that of plumbers, Kate Bridges wryly concluded that plumbers had more autonomy in their work lives. Autonomy was one of the central concerns of Vista City teachers.

What is meant by autonomy? When we say that teachers wanted autonomy, we mean that they wanted to be able to make independent judgments, and to have their decision-making abilities respected. They wanted opportunities for occupational self-direction and freedom from over-inhibiting constraints in their work.

All the teachers reported that the principal provided them with a high degree of autonomy in their classrooms. June Robinson wanted a variety of teaching styles represented at each grade level. Teachers felt that, from the principal's perspective, their classrooms were theirs. While the principal conducted a once-a-year observation/evaluation of each classroom, she never asked to see lesson plans or have them submitted weekly for her signature. Almost every teacher highly approved of this style. Their school compared well to others in this respect:

> In Westside, it's the person on high calling all his underlings in and telling them what to do. He says, "You're going to do this, and this, and this." And then they come around to check and make sure this is true! That's absolutely not the case here and that's one of the best things about the school.

Only one teacher wanted a more authoritarian structure. She believed that a policy where the principal signed lesson plans insured better teaching and higher morale.

The freedom the curriculum provided was progressively narrowing, however, for the school district had decided that starting the next year, all elementary schools would use the same basal text (in addition to Distar). They had made this decision to facilitate transfers (which occurred frequently) between schools. Though teachers on the reading committee had participated in the decision, many teachers protested this decision because it did not allow them to use different kinds of books with different kinds of children.

Teachers perceived their autonomy to be limited in two major ways: first, by the bureaucratic problems of school life which forced teachers to contrast their ideal of service with its daily implementation; and second by the intrusiveness of community parents whose image, if not actual behavior, threatened to undermine teachers' sense of authority.

Autonomy and the Work of Women

Autonomy has been a central issue in the study of women's work. There are several reasons for this. First, as the women's movement sought to challenge stereotypes about women in society, feminist researchers questioned traditional assumptions about passivity, dependence, and subordination as the "natural" styles of women. Second, researchers wondered whether women were so different from men in the workplace, and attempted to find what conditions enhanced women's as compared to men's job satisfaction. And third, studies of job discrimination focused on the many ways in which women were excluded from occupations which had high professional status, and demanded independence in one's own work and/or authority over others.

Whatever the details of their individual reasons for choosing teaching as a career, their choice reflected an acquiescence to traditional feminine values as they connected with social class. Once in these positions, however, the views women teachers held

on women and work did not necessarily remain static. For many, their views changed in line with the rising expectations for women experienced in some segments of the population. As their views changed, however, the social image of their occupation remained constant. The teachers were no longer content with the occupational stereotype: it reflected neither what they considered an accurate depiction of their lives nor what they wanted for themselves.

When these teachers thought about professional autonomy, their ideal was the doctor. He (and they thought of doctors as men) kept patients waiting for appointments if he wanted, he told them what they needed to do, and patients did not have the knowledge to question him. Parents around Vista City, however, had the knowledge to question the teachers. Many of them had masters degress in education themselves. Teachers hungered after the symbol of the professional life.

Intrusive parents and the impersonal bureaucracy symbolized to teachers the lack of autonomy in their work. In this chapter we examine the teachers' criticisms of parental and bureaucratic interference. We also suggest how teachers' concerns for autonomy relate to the social position of women.

Teachers want autonomy for a number of reasons. First, autonomy provides a good work environment. Studies of men and women in many work settings suggest few gender differences in the understanding of what makes a good work environment (Marrett, 1972; Miller, 1970; Miller, Schooler, Kohn and Miller, 1979; Saleh and Lalljee, 1969).

Second, teachers as well desire autonomy in their work. Other studies suggest and this research confirms: the importance of independence in the work situation. While more recent research plainly reinforces this view (see, for example Grandjean and Bernal, 1979; Leiter, 1981), a 1961 dissertation on "factors productive of satisfaction in teaching" finds that "the freedom to operate on one's own is the factor mentioned most frequently by teachers as contributing to teaching satisfaction" (McPherson, 1976).

Third, teachers associate autonomy with professionalism which symbolizes respect and status. Professionalism becomes a means of attaining respect

for the work one does. The desire for respect and status is not new. As Susan B. Anthony said in 1852:

> It seems to me you fail to comprehend the cause of the disrespect of which you complain. Do you not see that so long as society says woman has not brains enough to be a doctor, lawyer, or minister, but has plenty to be a teacher, every man of you who condescends to teach tacitly admits before all Israel and the sun that he has no more brains than a woman? (Curti, 1935: 190).

Half a century later, Margaret Haley, the activist for the rights of teachers and women, said: "Nowhere in the United States today does the public school, as a branch of public service, receive from the public either the moral or financial support needed to enable it properly to perform its important function in the social organism: (Haley, 1904).

Fifth, women teachers have also experienced the rising tide of expectations for women. They want greater recognition for and status in their work. As women aim for and attain positions with more autonomy, teachers want to replicate these gains in schools.

Concerns about autonomy, then, took two basic forms. The first sort reflected concerns for control in the workplace. They usually took the form of complaints against bureaucratic or parental influence in the classroom. The second form of concern about autonomy related more directly to what the women perceived as their low social status as teachers and their simultaneous desire to reap some of the benefits of the women's movement (i.e., increased involvement in the professions).

In this chapter I want to show how teachers' focus on autonomy reflected not only their concerns for a good working environment, but a desire to reinforce or raise their status as women. Autonomy signified a defense against the domestic image of teaching. The emphasis on the importance of autonomy provided teachers with an acceptable avenue to raise their status. They could thus avoid framing the problems they faced as women who taught as an issue of social discrimination against women. Their concern with autonomy, then, reflected their needs as

women in an occupation which had low social status during a period of rising expectations for women. It also reflected their needs as workers in a particular educational organization. It is a traditional complaint of teachers, in other words, but it serves a new goal as well.

First, we will describe the complaints teachers had about school bureaucracy and community parents. Then we will analyze the role of gender in teachers' reactions to parents.

THE ANATOMY OF BUREAUCRACY

Teachers and Bureaucracy

The reality of daily life in schools created conflicts for teachers between their ideal of service, and its implementation. This conflict between ideal and reality in service professions has received perceptive comment in the literature (see, for example, Becker et al., 1961; Lipsky, 1980). The distortions of the ideal are clearly revealed in the discussion of life in a military hospital by a woman who had left Oxford for a time during World War I to volunteer as a nurse:

> It was always so strange that when you are working you never think of all the inspiring thoughts that make you take up the work in the first instance. Before I was in the hospital at all I thought that because I suffered myself I should feel it a great thing to relieve the sufferings of other people. But now, when I am actually doing something which I know relieves someone's pain, it is nothing but a matter of business. I may think lofty thoughts about the whole thing before or after, but never at the time. At least, almost never. Sometimes some quite little thing makes me stop short all of a sudden and I feel a fierce desire to cry in the middle of whatever it is I am doing (Brittain, 1933).

For those women who entered teaching motivated by an ideal of service, the realities of daily life in school produced a similar diminuation of "lofty

thoughts." Kate Bridges is a good example. Teaching, she said, had been a "calling" for her. Raised in comfortable surroundings and well-educated, she had gone to one of the Seven Sisters for her undergraduate degree and to an Ivy League school for her Masters. Bridges had a vision of what teaching should be. A central part of that vision included a teacher's right to make clinical judgments about children's education.

When she felt unable to exercise what she considered her right as a teacher, a task she described as well within her abilities, she felt as if she had lost control. Consider the following example:

> What blew my mind open one time in the fall happened when I had a string of these specialists coming in. They felt they had the complete right to come in and say, "Hey, we've got to have your class for a half-hour, when can you do it?" And you've got to think, ah, I'll have to cancel this English lesson, I've got to cancel that... It doesn't matter, this person had the right to come into your classroom. So after all this stuff during an arithmetic class in comes this lady that I've never laid eyes on before. She doesn't identify herself, walks in--doesn't even ask can she come in, just walks right in, says in front of all the kids (taking over the class in effect), "Do you have any Indian children in the class?" Now this was October I think. I wasn't aware that I had any Indian children in the class. A child raises her hand: "My mother is Indian." "Good," says the lady, "come with me." Takes the child out and the child is at least a grade below in everything and she needs every moment she can get in the classroom, but off she goes. Comes back, I don't know, forty-five minutes later with a note saying that she is going to participate in Native American education once a week for half an hour, Tuesdays from 12:30 to 1:00 or something like that. No, "Would it be good, would it be convenient, was it best for the child, what did the parents think?" This lady simply gives me this piece of paper.

Furious, Bridges "roared down" to the principal's office demanding to know who this woman was and what gave her the right to behave as she had. It turned out that the specialist had been sent from downtown, her permission having originated there rather than in the principal's office. As Bridges saw it, her job as a teacher was to serve the pupils in her class. This intruder had taken away her right to decide how she was going to do her job.

The impersonality of the bureaucracy was a frequent criticism of teachers. It was out of touch with teachers, it generated paperwork which required effort and then ignored it, it was undemocratic--it did not solicit teachers' views adequately.

The fourth grade team, for example, expressed criticism and anger at the central school administration for a funded project they were supposed to implement. It was an effort of the life skills curriculum committee to integrate varieties of activities and teaching styles: affective, physical, and cognitive modes were employed in the project. The fourth grade team felt that they had to implement a project that was poorly designed. Too many activities were demanded of them; not enough time was available to decompress after each activity; and it was difficult to integrate this new project into the round of activities that went with their regular curriculum. As they saw it, the demands of the bureaucracy were out of touch with the reality of their lives. The central administration, as they saw it, did not respect their knowledge of what could be done.

The sixth grade team was unhappy with the mandate of the social studies curriculum committee for disposing of "world communities" in the sixth grade (see Chapter 6, for a full discussion of the nature of this conflict). Those responsible for the decision were pictured as faceless bureaucrats. Bernice Smith said that she was going to study world communities anyway, even though "they" had taken them out of the sixth grade curriculum. To the question, "Now, can you tell me who 'they' are?", she responded, "You know, <u>them</u>." Bernice reported that her team was "upset" at how the committee had mandated what the sixth grade teachers could teach in their rooms. She was not convinced that the committee knew as much about the sixth grade students as she did.

The special education bureaucracy came in for ample criticism from teachers as well. Dana Barrett found them "unsupportive and unaware." Carrie Amundsen thought that their program was in disarray: "I'd really like to go down and organize that office." Amy Michaels reflected Dana Barrett's view that the special education administration generated an enormous amount of paperwork that no one read, and that the special education teachers never got any feedback from them. Amy had just finished preparing a "detailed" write-up on each of the children in her class. This write-up took a great deal of time, but she managed to submit hers on time. The next day she received a note from the special education office instructing her to fill out a checklist on each of the children. The checklist, she said, was very short, and "not revealing at all about a child." Amy expressed her disdain for this list. She was absolutely convinced that all the material she had so painstakingly prepared on each child would get filed and go unread. "You know all they will ever see is that checklist." What a waste of time, she felt, had been the earlier assignment.

Bureaucratic procedures also undermined teachers' sense of autonomy when the particular practice appeared demeaning to them. Inservice was one of those procedures. It was perceived as a bureaucratic phenomenon that touched a particularly sore nerve. Many teachers, that is, felt so self-conscious about their social image as ordinary women, that they were highly attuned to behaviors which patronized them intellectually.

The content of inservice programs was criticized by many teachers as "demeaning." Sylvia Robinson, for example, expressed dismay that the central administration would "pay a fortune" to a woman to give a talk at one inservice session when the woman seemed to know nothing about the educational situations Vista City teachers experienced.

Christine Bart reported that most of the inservice was a "total waste of time." People went through the motions, she said, of soliciting teachers' input, but there was nothing substantial to it. She said, "The inservice workshops are supposed to be determined on the basis of what teachers want, and they have these sessions that we don't even want." When the teachers

asked June about their lack of input, she replied, "Well, I sent out a ditto sheet at the beginning of the year asking what you wanted." The teachers turned to each other in surprise that sending out a barely legible ditto sheet with all the paperwork of the opening week of school fulfilled the requirement that was in their contract.

The result, according to Christine, was that teachers wasted valuable time sitting through sessions they just did not need. Christine explained that teachers wanted time to plan new activities and innovations. She gave an example of why Vista City teachers felt frustrated. "Take for example the one they had last Friday. June gave us a million things to do and told us that all the items had to be done and then said, 'Now go do them and you can have the rest of the time to yourself.' I looked at the clock and had just forty minutes left to do all this in."

Some teachers mourned the lost potential of the inservice sessions. Jessica Bonwit shared many educational values with Kate Bridges. Like Bridges, she had an enormous dedication to the children she taught; they both tended to spend their free time, whether at lunch or during breaks, working on their teaching. Like Bridges as well, Bonwit wanted intellectual challenges to keep her from "going stale." As she said, "If you don't get renewed, you get burned out because you end up giving out all the time."

Bonwit wished that inservice provided teachers with this renewal, and expressed anger that it did not. The previous October, for example, all of the regular classroom teachers in the city had gone to one of the elementary schools for their "Superintendent's Day" inservice meeting. There they were, five hundred or so teachers sitting in the auditorium with a new language arts curriculum spread open on their laps. The speaker on the stage said, "Please open to the Table of Contents." They did so. They were unprepared for what followed. The speaker first read through the table of contents. He then proceeded to read the fourth grade curriculum to them. It took about an hour.

Jessica said, "The whole thing was just so ridiculous and demeaning. I mean, teachers can read, we can get up and read that ourselves and we could have done that and then used the time for other things."

She said, "Any day that you're away from kids is really rejuvenation. And that's why you need to use your inservice time well to get new ideas." Going through the motions of inservice when real inservice was needed, she said, showed that teachers' work was not valued. In her view, the administrators who planned these workshops were neither good teachers themselves nor very fond of teachers. Just reminiscing about this occasion revived her anger.

Bureaucracy intruded in still another way to limit autonomy through the implementation of rules that needed to be interpreted for the whole school. Teachers who have experience with elementary school-children come to expect that around all school rules will come testing and children's desire to carve out as much freedom for themselves as they can. With a school of over eight hundred children, however, the administration and staff shared the view that major common understandings of limits were essential to school order. It was on the specifics of interpretation, however, that teachers felt self-conscious. The need for arbitrary interpretation of some school rules, particularly ones relating to discipline, reinforced teachers' feelings of dependence.

At a faculty council meeting, Bob Jackson told the representatives that he needed to discuss some problems regarding discipline. He told the teachers that under no circumstances were the kids to wear hats on their heads or wear their coats in class.

Teachers asked a number of questions to clarify what he meant. Could the kids, for example, wear stocking caps (meaning, that is, could black kids wear hose to fix their hair)? About the coats, teachers wanted to know if the kids wore several coats, did they have to take all of them off or just the top one? Bob said that he knew that some of the kids wore five or six coats and if they took the top ones off they could leave the bottom ones on. There was some joking about top coats and bottom coats. Then Jennie McAuliffe asked if kids had to take off their down vests. Did vests count as coats? Bob said, "Well, if they wear a jacket under their down vests, then they have to take the vests off, but if they just wear a vest, that's okay, they can leave it on."

All students, Bob said, had to wear shoes to the cafeteria. Some discussion sparked among the teachers about whether they made kids wear shoes in the classroom. Lisa Novak said she made her kids wear shoes all the time in case there was a fire drill. Discussion followed about the wearing of clogs. All remarked how noisy clogs were at Vista City Elementary because of the wooden floors and the lack of carpeting. Penny McAuliffe imitated how girls in her class crossed their legs, dangling a clog on the upper foot. They maneuvered that foot so that the clog fell off to a resounding clatter on the floor. The administrators felt that pupils could not be forbidden to wear clogs, but that the situation had to be closely monitored.

The next issue was the wearing of bells on the shoes or in the hair. Apparently this practice had gained great popularity and the racket the jangling of all these bells caused in the classroom was "quite enormous." Bob held up the thumb and forefinger of his right hand to show the size of the bell that he thought was allowable. All larger bells should be forbidden. Several teachers drew circles imitating these sizes in their notes.

Teachers' reaction to this discussion revealed their dilemma. While some laughter occurred during the discussion, at the end of the meeting many of the teachers rolled their eyes heavenward to reveal their disgust at the content of the discussion. These bureaucratic details of school life intruded into their image of themselves as educators with work-defined tasks and goals. These details, which teachers did not integrate into their ideal concept of teaching, chipped away at their image of themselves as serious educational workers. "Real teaching" was watching the lightbulb go off in an individual child, often as a result of their particular efforts (see Lieberman and Miller, 1971).

Additionally, teachers recognized the importance of rules in both school and classroom. Yet, the need for an administrator's arbitrary interpretation of them (i.e., the size of the bell, or what counted as a coat or hat), put them in a dependent position they disliked. For as we said earlier, part of teachers' definition of autonomy included the freedom to bend rules as necessary. While this meeting would not affect many

teachers' continued practice of this, it elevated the importance of the individual issues. In the face of bureaucracy, teachers felt like replaceable cogs. They resented these intrusions on their autonomy.

The Principal and Bureaucracy

The teachers did not see the principal as a powerful figure in the face of bureaucracy. Many teachers showed sympathy with her position, which they described as buffeted about by bureaucratic winds. Earlier, for example, we saw that when Kate Bridges went to complain about the Native American specialist, she discovered that the principal knew nothing about her presence. As Kate described it, June had no control over this.

Christine Bart had a similar view of June's position. She felt, in fact, that this vagueness about the lines of authority dampened her own desire to be a principal. "June doesn't get any reinforcement from higher ups downtown either. They get it from higher ups and then they just treat us the same way. That's how things get worked out down the line."

Wheatley (1979) and Kanter (1976) have discussed the importance of a leader's power for her staff. When the leader can accomplish things for the staff, then she can become a good role model. When she cannot, as June Robinson could not with the central administration, then she could not gain the same respect.

THE AUTHORITY OF PARENTS

Parents and Teachers

Community parents provided a second major challenge to teachers' sense of autonomy. As Amelia Dickenson said, "You're interested in what concerns us. I guess one thing is parents." Maria Johnson said that many of the parents were "just on our backs."

Sarah Jacobs said that what made teaching most difficult at Vista City, what made her feel the most pressured, "are the parents." Could she mean all the parents of the school children? She meant, "the intellectual--or pseudointellectual ones." Parents often came into her classroom, she said, and wanted to observe or look at her lesson plans. "There is actually nothing wrong with that," she said, "but it acts as an irritant." She ended up feeling that she was in a fishbowl. But it was not only or even especially her, said Sarah, who had these feelings. "Many of the teachers feel frightened of the parents. They feel caught between the pressures of school district requirements and parental desires." Vista City Elementary held a city-wide reputation among teachers for its "pushy" parents. Actually, the adjectives "pushy" and "professional" modified "parents" fairly indiscriminantly in discussions of Vista City parents.

One anecdote told around the city characterized this type of parent.[1] A parent once came in to a Vista City classroom and said loudly to the teacher that she (the teacher) was absolutely not to use any more dittoes with this class. She (the mother) was just sick of dittoes. This is the image of the intrusive parent: the assertive woman married to a professional husband with nothing better to do than make life difficult for the classroom teacher.

Comparing teachers' reactions to parents at Archduke, we found both similarities and differences. Teachers at Archduke were similar to Vista City teachers in their understanding of the importance of professional status. They were different in their reactions because their situation was reversed. There, parents were "phantoms." They had to use ingenuity to get parents involved in the school. Performances with refreshments always brought parents to the school, for example, so besides getting children up on the stage, Archduke held many movie nights.

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[1] Notice how the story begins referring to the parent and ends with "she" or "the mother." Vista City teachers reacted similarly.

Even the teachers at a school where parents had little involvement in school life were keenly aware of problems presented by certain kinds of parents. While teachers reported that parents never undermined their authority at Archduke, they recounted experiences more similar to what Vista City teachers experienced. Parents were not a problem now, because the parents respected their authority (except when they were drunk). The teachers at Archduke felt that whether the problem existed depended on the nature of the parents in the community and the school principal.

Sometimes Archduke teachers confused Vista City teachers with the parents. The school, itself, that is, had a reputation. One teacher said, "Listen, there is such a difference between Vista City and here. It's a good thing you came here--we'll set you straight." Another teacher added, "There if kids come to school with holes in their socks, teachers get upset. Here, we usually have kids come to school with no socks at all."

When asked to identify which parents caused the trouble she complained about, Christine Bart said, that they were neither the downtown parents nor the black parents who were difficult. It was the university parents. "The parents of the downtown kids and the black parents are just fine. You know the parents in this neighborhood are very social. They're wives of university professors and they're just so sure that their kids have to be bright and do well because they're bright and come from good families."

Some of the younger teachers described parents' view of the ideal teacher: a person with no outside life who hands back corrected papers immediately, who is available for phone calls at all times, and who can meet in informal conferences on Sunday nights.[2] That is not the kind of life that

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[2] While sitting with teachers having lunch in the lunchroom, I witnessed a parent interact with Heather Samuels. The parent walked over to Heather and said she wanted to talk about her son, Scotty. She said, "Last year he got A's and B's. This year every time I ask someone

teachers wanted for themselves, nor is it the kind that even if they wanted, many of them could have. Teachers wanted an outside life. Besides, none of the married women had wives to minister to their needs at home.

Heather Samuels said that there had been many changes in her life since she had gotten a boyfriend. She had developed this steady relationship last spring and it had affected her relationship to her work. She said that she used to call the parents more frequently about classroom issues, she would correct papers more rapidly, and she just threw herself into teaching. As she put it, "teaching was my whole life." "Now," she said, "I want a life outside of school." She wanted to spend time with her boyfriend and previously the factor of time had never been important.

Jennie McAuliffe reflected on these changes in Heather's life as well. "Things are changing now that Heather has a boyfriend. Heather would come in after school and stand in front of my desk and when she would start to talk I expected that she'd start talking about work. She used to do that. Now she might come in and right off start talking about her boyfriend."

From the perspective of Kate Bridges, it is the single women who are most dedicated to teaching. She described Meg Tinker, for example, as "a magnificent teacher, and very, very caring." Meg was

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2 (continued) on your team how he's doing, everybody says he's doing well, but he's not getting any A's at all. He's just getting B's." Heather said that when she spoke of Scotty doing well, she was referring to his "adjustment." The parent said, "Yes, that's why I haven't been coming down on him because this is the first year I haven't had to drag him to school in the morning." The parent continued that she really wanted to talk with Heather, and anytime Heather could meet, she would drop everything, "even if it was a Sunday night."

an older woman who had never married. As Bridges said, "It seems to me that so many of the people who are really dedicated to teaching are single women." Bridges, herself, however, was one of those teachers who returned papers immediately, who made home visits to all the families of children in her classroom, and who enjoyed an outstanding reputation in the school. And she was married and had three children.

Many complaints highlighted teachers' feelings that they were not consulted about issues affecting their territory, the classroom. Kate Bridges, for example, did a favor for Laurie Hallock, whom she described as having a "diametrically opposite" teaching style from her own. She teamed with Laurie for math classes:

> One of the kids who came from her class was a sad little boy with all kinds of insecurities. I could see that he was a sad little boy with insecurities and that he hated math. He'd get very upset if he didn't get it. I told him that I wept through almost every math class throughout elementary school and said that it wasn't a great favorite of mine either. I was trying to deal with his anxieties about math. Well, one day Laurie came to me and said, "He's not going to be in your class anymore." She said his mother had been down to talk with June Robinson and "the mother doesn't want him in your class."
>
> Interviewer: "Why?"
>
> Well, I never knew; that was part of the problem for me. The other teacher told me, "He's scared of you." I said to her, "I have to believe you, though I've been teaching for twenty years and this is the first child that I've heard of that was scared of me, but if he is, he is." But why didn't the parent come to me and say, "Look, my child is having a problem with you?" Instead, the parent goes to the principal. The principal doesn't come to me and tell me that the child is having a problem, nor did the principal say to his mother, "Did you talk to Kate Bridges?" So the decision is made and how do I hear about it? From the other teachers--this happens a lot.

Kate Bridges told me this story to illustrate the powerlessness she felt when she was subjected to parental behavior of this sort. She was not a party to the matter. An additional factor for her was the principal's failure to mediate professionally.

Sometimes the behavior of parents emphasized teachers' powerlessness by making them feel like objects. At this particular school, parents had been allowed for several years to visit classrooms in the spring to get a sense of the teachers' style in order, if they wanted, to request a particular teacher for their child for the following year. No teacher liked this process as it heightened their already prominent feelings of being fish in a goldfish bowl. But some teachers developed strategies to handle this situation in particular ways. Christine Bart, for example, explained that she could deal with the situation if she could talk with parents after each visit. Because she had a student teacher each year who by the time the parents' visitation could handle the class alone, Bart took advantage of this circumstance to talk with the parents out in the hall for a few minutes after an observation session. This monitoring process restored her sense of control.

On one occasion during the previous spring, however, an incident occurred which even Christine Bart's strategy could not meliorate. A couple came in one day while she was teaching and sat near her desk. While she was doing some direct instruction with her class she saw them rifle through different papers on her desk, open and glance through her lesson plan book, and examine a pile of dittoes. She said it was a devastating experience for her. It said to her, "the teacher doesn't count but the parents do."

Parents' view of time was a frequent concern. Maria Johnson criticized parents' spontaneous habit of dropping in on teachers after school to talk about their children. "One of the things that is really hard is that at the end of a long day, parents think that they can come in and talk to you for a long period of time about things." She has often said, "Well, how about if we make an appointment to talk about this?" Parents will often say in response, however, "Oh, it will only take five minutes," and then it goes on for an hour. From Maria's perspective, this kind of treatment symbolized the lack of respect that parents felt for teachers' work. Time became a symbol of power.

Kate Bridges saw the issue of time with parents similarly. The problem was especially prevalent, as she saw it, with parents who were involved in P.T.O. work. The parents would be in the school frequently for whatever their tasks were, and they would use the occasions to stop in their child's classroom saying something like, "I'm just here and I want to check and see how the setting is." That might seem perfectly reasonable to a parent, Kate said, but it was not to a teacher with twenty-eight kids in front of her:

> We had a meeting before Christmas where this came up again and again and again. The parent feels no need to stop at the office and say, "Would it be all right if I went down to the classroom?" Or to call the teacher the night before or send a note: "I would like to come." "Can I come in?" "When can I talk to you?" or whatever. They just feel they have complete open entrance!

Teachers wanted to have more control over the relationship and the parent disregard of time blocked that hope.

Laurie Hallock also complained about parents devaluing the teachers' time, and saw it as a sign of disrespect. She objected to parents being allowed to visit the classrooms during the day, she said, because their presence meant that the teacher had to take time away from the children in order to speak with them. "You can't visit a doctor or a lawyer any time you want to, and my work is just as important as theirs." It was a challenge to her professionalism.

Not all teachers had had experiences of this nature and there were many warm words of praise for the efforts of many parents in school functions.[3] Teachers

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[3] As we said in Chapter 5, special education teachers often had a closer relationship to the parents of the children in their classes than did the teachers of typical children. Many of the special education teachers needed to work closely with the parents in order to develop federally required I.E.P.s. When they were not able to meet with parents to develop the I.E.P.s, teachers were critical of the parents' lack of involvement in the lives of their children. Teachers were especially close to parents of autistic children.

who criticized some parents praised others. Dana Barrett, for example, said: "The parents in the community are just wonderful; they're really anxious to help; they're very involved with their children's education." Amelia Dickenson, who had announced that parents were a concern of teachers said that she had few problems with parents herself. She had learned how to handle parents at an earlier school where she worked, and from working with the principal, Ginnie Carlisle. Her method, she said, was to shape the relationships herself. "Anyway," she continued, "You can't blame parents for advocating for their children because we all want the best for our children."

Kate Bridges, who also had critical words to say about parents, had positive things to say as well. She was one of the teachers who rarely had a problem with a parent. Part of the reason, she said, was that like Amelia Dickenson, she "(shaped) the relationships with the parents of the kids in my room. That's why I make these home visits." She told parents that she planned to visit them and negotiated for a convenient time for her to visit their homes.

Maria Johnson, in spite of her criticism of parents who were "on their backs," also said, "However, there are some parents who are very helpful in school. They help all the time; they're there; they go on field trips. To those people I always try and give time just so they'll feel that I appreciate what they do."

Additionally, teachers were critical of parents with no involvement in their children's education. Children who went home after school to empty houses, children whose parents never responded to repeated notes, children who came to school appearing physically unattended (for example, the child would be tired because the parent did not enforce bedtimes)--these kids all received teacher sympathy. While teachers strongly criticized these parents, there was one large difference. These parents did not challenge their authority.

Frequently, teachers sympathized with parents complaints--over issues such as incompetent substitutes, program appropriateness for a brilliant (gifted) child. But, the power the parents symbolized to the teachers was present even for those who had not--yet--as they would always say, had any difficulties.

Jennie McAuliffe worried about the problems parents had created for her friend Heather Samuels. "She's supposed to have the least problem kids, but gee... she really has her hands full. A few of the parents have really been difficult this year and have gone to talk to June about her." Jennie, on the other hand, was having a good year with the parents in her class. "You know, I haven't had any trouble with them this year at all. I don't know whether it's luck or not, but it's really hard when the parents go after you."

Jessica Bonwit complained that parents treated teachers like "scapegoats." They wanted teachers to get their children to do the very things they could not get the kids to do. She will often get an irate call, she said, from parents about concerns like why she did not send the student home with the right pair of boots. In her view it was the parents' "place" to take care of those responsibilities. "I tell those parents on the phone, 'Look, I'm responsible for your kid's education during the day, but you're responsible for those kinds of things.'"

When parents make remarks to her like, "My kid is just not like that at home,'" she said, "I just don't believe them. I know that kids, especially at this age, are like an open book, and basically what they're like at school, they're like at home. Now I know that some teachers bring out the best in kids and some teachers bring out the worst--I'm not saying that they don't--but basically the kid I see here is the kid at home. A teacher either builds on that or sabotages it." Many teachers prefaced complaints about parents with remarks about how few problems they had actually had with parents themselves. When their colleagues had problems, however, they usually identified with the colleague.

Christine Bart, for example, explained that her own self-confidence prevented her from having some of the problems with parents other teachers faced: "Another thing that makes life difficult around here is that there are many good teachers who are very good in the classroom, but who really lack self-confidence about what they do. Parents can absolutely destroy these people."

Christine gave examples of how her self-assurance prevented conflicts with parents from destroying her. Certain Vista City parents enjoyed school-wide reputations as being "impossible." When a teacher spoke of one of these parents she would preface her remarks with, "Who, I'm sure you've heard of." Hannah Rogers was one of these parents (many teachers and the principal had stories to tell about her), and her daughter Anne was in Christine's class. At the beginning of the year Hannah said, "Oh, I hope you're not still using Distar in your room, Christine!" Christine replied, "Hannah, you know I've used Distar ever since I've been here and I'm always going to use it. If you don't want Anne to be in my class, feel free to take her out."

One teacher Christine described as a good teacher who lacked self-confidence was Laurie Hallock. Laurie Hallock herself made both positive and negative comments about parents. On the negative side, she explained that a conflict with a parent last year had propelled her to request a transfer from Vista City Elementary. In that situation, she said, she had a child in her class whose parent was upset because her child was so far behind in reading. The parent went to the superintendent's office, and said things about Laurie that were lies. She lied to June Robinson, the principal, as well. Laurie said, "I was just in a terrible situation." The content of the conflict was over whether the child should be labelled "mildly mentally retarded." The parent just did not want her child to be labelled. As Laurie saw it, the child was "only one point off being labelled mentally retarded on the tests, and if the label would get the child better services, why not do it?" While this was occurring, she made a vow, "Never again will I go through this. I'll stay here for one more year, but then I'm leaving."

When faced with the question of how many parents caused difficulty, however, Laurie said that actually it was just a few parents "who gave the parents a bad name." She mentioned several parents of children in her classroom with whom she had become good friends. She said, "A lot of the parents have really helped me a lot."

The parents' power was revealed not only through teacher complaints about them, but also by teachers' dramatic reactions to their praise. In the midst of

one lunchroom discussion about how pressured and difficult life was for Vista City teachers because of the parents, for example, Sarah Jacobs showed me a letter she had received from the parent of a girl in her class about report cards. Sarah said she was "thrilled" at the parents' comments, which included the message, "As you know, we've had many ups and downs with Henrietta this year and having her in your class has just been a wonderful experience for us." Sarah commented that she actually got quite a few letters like this.

Meg Tinker, who had survived a particularly difficult episode with parents early in the year, spoke at the beginning of a faculty council meeting about a "wonderful comment" a mother had written on the most recent report card. She said she wanted to "frame this comment" and asked the principal in all seriousness if she could cut it out of the report card. The principal said she would have it copied for her instead.[4]

The parents' power, while common in many schools of this type, rested in this particular case on the particular history of integration at this school. When two schools had been collapsed into one several years earlier and racial problems had threatened the school, the former superintendent wanted to insure that white parents kept their children in the school. The principal at the time was a woman whose reputation with parents was terrible. She was perceived as unreceptive to parent concerns. To handle this situation, the superintendent eventually removed the principal. During that transition year, however, he assured the parents that he was always available if they had problems. And there were many problems that year. Some parents accustomed themselves to skipping several hierarchical levels in dealing with the school and made straight for the superintendent's office.

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[4] Meg applied for a transfer at the end of the school year because of her experiences with parents.

As Christine Bart said, "What some of the parents do that just eats me up is that they go right to June or worse downtown with their problem without coming to me first. The terrible thing is that the superintendent denies that he lets them in, but he does. It has never happened to me, but I see it as a moral issue, and in the back of my mind it could be me next." Teachers resented having the situation removed from their hands.

Kate Bridges felt that parents should come in and speak directly to the teacher before they went to the principal. She might suggest herself that a parent go speak to the principal because the child needed a different kind of classroom, but she wanted parents to come to her first. She was critical of parents who went right to the district offices:

> Some parents run down to the superintendent before even talking to the principal. They'll say, my kid is on level 10 and ought to be on level 35 and the teacher's not doing anything about it. And I want something done. What started all of this was _____ (former superintendent) bending over backwards for integration purposes, to have the parents feel they control the schools. It worked out beautifully and I really have to hand it to him what he did for integration. But that just enabled parents to feel that anything that they wanted was going to be done.

What multiplied the difficulties, as Bridges saw it was that parent expectations were rising while teacher options were narrowing. Parents, in other words, wanted more, while teachers felt that they could do less.

Heather Samuels wished that parents could come to her before they went to the principal. She was critical of the principal for allowing parents to speak with her first. What June said to her in a recent incident of this type was, "Look, don't worry about them. I absolutely believe what you say. I know you're a good teacher and I absolutely support you." Heather described her reaction as one of frustration. "Why, then, did June let them talk to her before they talked to me?"

One of the reasons that teachers preferred having the parent come to them first rather than go to the principal, was that they could not count on the principal's defending them (see Becker, 1953 for a discussion of this issue). They saw the principal's policy as one of "openness" to the parents. Some teachers felt that this was a good plan because it calmed parents (in a sense cooled them out). Others felt that if they could not count on the principal to defend them, they would rather deal with parents directly.

Christine said that she felt very critical of June for not taking a stand when parents were "threatening." The former principal, with whom she had a close relationship, often took a stand. She gave as an example an incident which occurred with the former principal. Christine had "a terrible parent" one year who threatened to take her child out of Christine's classroom. One afternoon Christine, the principal, and the former parent met in the principal's office. The parent turned to the principal and threatened, "Well, if things don't change I'm just going to take my child out of this school." The former principal replied, "Go ahead. I would be happy if you did that." The parent was so upset about this, Christine reported, that she went ahead and withdrew her child. Christine and the former principal "had a big laugh over that."

The Principal and Parents

June Robinson saw the community parents as one of the toughest aspects of Vista City Elementary. The very first day of fieldwork she said that some of the parents were very aggressive in their monitoring of their children's welfare at the school. They came into her office frequently to complain about what went on in classrooms. For that reason, she said, "This is a difficult school." She said that she felt the parents were "always on her back," and there was little she could say when people came in. She also said, however, that parent involvement helped create a strong school spirit.

During the year a number of conflicts with parents rose. One that June found particularly irksome involved a parent of a child in Heather Samuels' class. The father and mother had come to her about their dissatisfaction, but the father, a university professor,

did almost all of the talking. She described how upset he was that his daughter was not progressing rapidly enough. June said, "Finally, I turned to him just beside myself and said, 'What do you want me to do? Do you want me to fire her? Do you want me to change Carol to a different classroom? What do you want?' He said, 'I want you to contact all the room parents and find out who's dissatisfied.'" June could not believe this response, especially since the man's field was clinical psychology. "I can't do that," she told him, "That will totally undermine the teacher." June felt that the little girl was not telling her parents the whole truth about what was happening in class. She thought that part of the problem was that Carol was not doing as well as she wanted in the class, that she was competitive, and was upset that she had not "made the gifted and talented" program. She said, "You know, some of these children are very competitive. And their parents are too."

June had a policy of how she handled these conflicts with the teachers. She always told the teachers the substance of the parent complaint. She reported saying to Heather, "I know you're going to be upset about this, but you don't have to defend yourself to me, because I don't doubt you at all. But I want you to know what he said."

These problems in classrooms were difficult to handle. June said she felt she was "caught in a no-win situation between parent and parent. Some people want the education of their children to go one way and some people want another. And I find that I just can never please both groups." June felt that teachers approved of her method of responding to parents. "I don't think the teachers want me not to be open to the parents. At least if they do they haven't told me about it. I'm open because I feel that way, the parents will come and see how good we are."

Not all problems with parents involved classroom teachers, however. June had problems with fathers over school renovation. One father, for example, had been in France for a year. He returned home after the plans had been finalized. He was so upset about the placement of the playground, that he called the engineering firm to question the architect's integrity. The architect then called June, horrified at what had happened. The architect was a favorite with the principal and the teachers because "he listened" to their

comments. The parent, getting no satisfaction, created a "Grounds Committee" which had not previously existed and appointed himself head of it. This tactic was not successful either.

Whatever the specifics of this particular situation, parents have long posed a threat to the autonomy of teachers, and to the authority of school administrators as well. William Reese (1978) has written of similar difficulties during the organization of the National Congress of Mothers during the Progressive Era. And as Seymour Sarason (1982) has said, the Cold War did not start in Europe, it started between parents and teachers.

Many teachers saw the problems with parents' challenging their status as professionals. As Laurie Hallock said, "When the parents act so selfishly, it makes you not able to be a real professional." Heather Samuels put it similarly. "Don't these parents know we're professionals?" In this next section we examine how the parent challenge to professionalism including gender-related concerns.

THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER

How do we understand this conflict between parents and teachers? The most common sociological explanation for conflicts between parents and teachers is the social class conflict model. Conflicting values and lower levels of educational attainment among teachers, compared to parents of the children at Vista City Elementary School, cause friction. As one parent said, "I can't see that teachers have the life of the mind at the top of their agenda." Teachers feel defensive and threatened in these situations, the model explains, while they feel comfortable in working class communities where parents look up to them.[5]

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[5] A teacher at Archduke Elementary described the parents in one such community. "The way parents relate to teachers there is to come in and say to the teacher, 'Did you say my kid was giving you troubles? Thank you for telling me.' And out goes the parent, and whack, whack, whack."

While this model accounts for some of the conflict, its inadequacy is exposed in what it leaves unanswered. It does not account for the existence of teacher hostility to parents that crosses teachers' social class identification; it does not consider how the structure of schools affects teachers' career patterns and reward structures; and most importantly, it does not focus on the outstanding fact that the teachers are women, and those they feel most hostility toward are women as well. Let us examine each of these issues.

Social Class

Women who teach are not all of a type. Because of the acceptability of teaching as a field to enter, the occupation attracted, in earlier years at least, a wide range of women. Included were well-educated women with family backgrounds above the middle-middle class. Kate Bridges, at Vista City, for example, came from a very "good family" and had attended excellent educational institutions. While some teachers entered higher social classes through marriage, others came from well-off families themselves. Correspondingly, many community members who were now professional also came from working class backgrounds. Having left them behind, their status was achieved. The saliency of one's occupational role overwhelms individual social status. The sociological model looks less at this aspect and instead emphasizes the social class of the teacher.[6]

The Teaching Career

One reason parental restrictions on autonomy loom so large for teachers relates to limitations in the career structure of teaching. There are few rewards for a job done well or spectacularly. Unlike university teachers who may receive salary increases

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[6] Present stratification models are inadequate to explain the position of women. For an excellent discussion of this issue, see Acker (1980).

if they publish frequently, teachers receive no merit pay. Consequently, as we have discussed, teachers with good reputations resent those teachers who simply put in their time and leave, or who become known for their inadequate performances. These incompetent teachers challenge the self-esteem of those who are serious about their work. These inadequate or just mediocre teachers symbolize the shaky status of the occupational role. Hence, we find teachers wavering over the definition of professionalism. That label was sometimes reserved for"those who do a good job."

There is also practically no opportunity for promotion. Good teaching can be rewarded informally when principals will send teachers to conferences, or allow them time off from their work in the classroom to attend meetings of district-wide committees on which they sit. But the few rewards that are intrinsic to the school as an organization cause teachers to withdraw into isolation to protect their autonomy. At least they have their own classrooms. Parents' threats, consequently, take on greater power.[7]

Women Who Teach/Women Who Mother

The parent towards whom teachers feel greatest hostility is the mother. In fact, in the earliest days of fieldwork I did not see that complaints about parents might have anything to do with gender, either of the teachers' or of the parents'. I soon realized, however, that in most criticisms of parents, only one parent was the focus of concern. Actually, the very sentence which cued me in was: "I'm not like those mothers who sit at their kitchen tables with a coffee cup in my hands all the time..." It was not that fathers never had interchanges, even

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[7] These findings are supported by the work of McPherson (1972); Lortie (1975); and Metz (1978).

unpleasant ones, with teachers, for they did.[8] But it became apparent to me that teachers began their complaints talking about parents and finished talking about mothers.[9]

Some of this conflict we can explain because of the responsibility women in the community took for their children's education. They were the parent who was most present in the school. Social custom, as well, assigns to the mother the overseeing of the young child. But this explanation is only partially adequate.

Women teaching at Vista City Elementary had conflicts with a particular set of parents, those with "professional" standing. More specifically, their major conflicts lay with mothers who did not work outside the home who were professional on two counts. They were professional because their family status was professional--many of them were well-educated and had advanced degrees in education. They were also professional mothers.

These mothers, that is, interacted with teachers as part of their present occupational role just as teachers interacted with parents as part of their work role. As one mother, a single parent in transition from full-time parenting to full-time working, who chaired the Parents' Advisory Council put it:

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[8] It is important to note that the principal complained about both mothers and fathers. Many fathers went to the principal rather than the teacher because they were upset about administrative rather than pedagogical conflicts. But some fathers (as well as mothers) went over the teacher's head over an issue. As one father explained his visit to the principal rather than the teacher about a complaint, "Isn't that what she's there for?"

[9] In a discussion of parent-teacher relations which raises many similar issues, Rist also presents these conflicts using the word "parents." When he directly quotes a teacher, however, she says: "This damn group of meddling mothers has gotten me so mad, I feel like leaving this school" (1973: 60-61). See also McPherson (1972).

> I think there are many women (in this community) who have a lot of ability, who are bright and talented who are not doing enough with their lives. And so their child's school becomes the focus. They get on the phone and they gossip about a teacher or an activity. They spend a lot of energy and a lot of thinking on this school. Some of it's worthwhile, but some isn't, because much of it doesn't get to the direct source.

Middle-class mothers who work outside the home, however, are perceived to communicate with teachers as part of their private, non-public role. And they are generally perceived as less threatening.

In this context, teachers must also confront social norms which hold that teaching, particularly in the primary grades, is really only professional mothering. Bruce Pickett, the school psychologist at Archduke Elementary said that many parents were not certain about "exactly what went on" when little kids were in school. They have a clear understanding of what goes on in high school. They know that their kids take math, English, social studies, and science. Even though they might not know the actual content they could easily conceptualize the day. Parents did not have such a clear understanding, he felt, for what elementary school teachers did in the primary grades. They taught reading to be sure. But parents did not totally grasp the relationship between the cognitive and socialization efforts of elementary schoolteachers.

These social norms maintain that what stands between what mothers and teachers do is some technical education, perhaps, and a paycheck. It was this set of mothers, and they were certainly not in the majority at the school, who symbolized the problem. The teachers' conflicts seemed most intense with those parents who resisted seeing teaching as a legitimate occupational role. They were patronizing, teachers felt. Some teachers claimed that the most intrusive parents wanted their children to receive individual parenting rather than group teaching. According to these teachers, parents like this confused teaching with parenting (see Rist, 1978; Lipsky, 1980). As Bernice Smith said, she found that kind of parent "self-centered" because they were only interested in their own kid, not in the class. "They're not interested in the welfare of the class as a whole or in your welfare."

These mothers forced teachers to continually confront the fact that the teachers did socially devalued women's work. And, moreover, it was difficult for many teachers to put their fingers on exactly what did separate their work from the mothers'. Since some mothers had masters degrees in education, and spent time each week in the classroom running math groups or tutoring individual children, the teachers sometimes felt particularly uneasy even though they appreciated parental involvement. So teachers would say things like, "I have the files so I know the real story." They turned to the trappings of professionalism to rescue them, the window dressing of files, records, labels.[10]

We can see that teachers' concern with autonomy is not new. Additionally, we must note that research connects the desire for autonomy with important concerns that do not all relate to gender. Many people, both men and women, want independence in the workplace. At the same time, part of the Vista City teachers' desire for autonomy can be connected with gender. We see this particularly in the criticism of parents. Teachers use the word, "parents" in their complaints, but they mean mothers. It is mothers toward whom many women teachers at Vista City carried most hostility. This hostility among women occurred over a definition of role and responsibility. It was a conflict of power.

It can also be seen as a conflict over one's position as a woman in American society. Autonomy is the opposite of domesticity. Teaching, particularly elementary school teaching, carries a "domestic" image that many teachers disdain. Some teachers identify with the image because they hold traditional ideas about women working, but very few teachers fall into this category. Many others regret their situations, and wish they "were in management."

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[10] For an interesting discussion on the ways in which the work of mothers with young children has been excluded from definitions of teaching, see Martin (1982).

The domestic image of mothering contrasts with the autonomy of the professional. Mothering is socially devalued. Women feel little recognition for their work as mothers, particularly since any woman can mother. No training is necessary. Motherhood is also portrayed as confining.

The autonomous professional, however, makes a socially recognized contribution in his or her field. Special training is necessary, and the service that is provided is often not easily evaluated by the client to whom it is provided. This at least is the image, or symbol, of the professional that the teacher carries.

This image of the professional seemed more related to the symbol than the reality of professional life. Teachers sometimes compared themselves to doctors (see the cases of Jessica Bonwit and Laurie Hallock). But their image of the doctor's autonomy was filled with stilted, cliched images: doctors who have absolute control over their clients, doctors who always keep their patients waiting, doctors whose patients never complain. In more recent years, the consumer movement has contributed to the democratizing of the health field. Doctors also face growing challenges from consumers.

Earlier than the more recent consumer movement, however, doctors still did not live up to the symbol of professionalism because, in fact, it was a symbolic rather than realistic understanding. Doctors are just one case. As critics of professionalism have suggested, the symbol of professionalism is so far from the reality as to have its usefulness questioned:

> The symbol systematically ignores such facts as the failure of professions to monopolize their area of knowledge, the lack of homogeneity within professions, the frequent failure of clients to accept professional judgment, the chronic presence of unethical practitioners as an integrated segment of the professional structure, and the organizational constraints on professional autonomy. A symbol which ignores so many important features of occupational life cannot provide an adequate guide for professional activity (Becker, 1970: 103).

Teachers' professional status is, of course, socially in question. Teachers have been called both the "proletarians of the professions" (Mills, 1951) as well as "semi-professionals" (Etzioni, 1969). The sociological debate over the differentiation of occupations as compared to professions has been long (see for example, Cogan, 1953; Flexner, 1915; Goode, 1957; Wilensky, 1964).[11]

What Vista City teachers meant by "professional" was generally a nontechnical explanation. Their definition included their expertise and their specialized training, although the specialized training was debated. The kind of professionalism toward which these teachers gravitated, as we said, was a traditional model which appeared to guarantee their autonomy.

Christine Bart felt that "part of what makes a professional is the training, but that's not all of it because I think teachers are born and not made. And you don't learn how to be a teacher in college. It's not the degree because I would have been as good without the degree." If you were a poor teacher, she said, you were not a professional. "There are teachers who are here for their paycheck only and who really don't put in a lot of extra time and really don't care. They're not professional."[12]

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[11] While the debate has been long, it has been generally fruitless. For critiques of the traditional approach, see Hughes (1971)and Roth (1974).

[12] This view is common in occupations striving for professional status. When the transition occurs, people in these occupations become self-conscious about many work-related issues. They become "dreadfully afraid that some of their number will not observe company manners and so will hurt the reputation of all...." (Hughes, 1951: 311). Sloppy teachers did not observe company manners.

The test of a professional was how well you taught the children. "Being able to know differences in kids and develop a plan for them to learn well and follow through on that plan is the test of whether or not you are a professional." If you were a professional, Bart said, "then parents had to realize that you had to take responsibility for the decisions you made for the children."

Jessica Bonwit said, "A professional is someone who's had some special training and contributes some service to the country. It's not like having a job like an assembly-line worker. It has to be more than a job. Professionals are not just concerned about pay and many of them would work for low salaries because they have an intrinsic interest in their work." She emphasized the importance of service.

Heather Samuels defined it this way. "Acting like a professional means that you look at the objective and then you decide yourself what content you're going to use to get there. You make these decisions." They wanted, in other words, to decide what would be taught as well as how.

A student teacher in Amy Michaels' class said that she had learned a great deal about what it meant to be a professional from the time that she had spent studying education in England:

> In England, teachers have much higher standing as professionals because they make all the decisions about the curriculum. Here, the state makes the decisions about what the curriculum is going to be every year, rather than the headmistress in every school (who is without fail a former teacher) making these decisions. There, teachers really get to teach things they like and the things they don't like, they don't have to teach. In those ways, they end up being like a doctor--they get to make those kinds of decisions.

The traditional model distinguished between professional and nonprofessional occupations in ways that attracted teachers. In this model, a non-professional occupation:

> has customers; a professional occupation has clients. A customer determines what services and/or commodities he wants, and he shops around until he finds them. His freedom of decision rests upon the premise that he has the capacity to appraise his own needs and to judge the potential of the service or of the commodity to satisfy them.... In a professional relationship, however, the professional dictates what is good or evil for the client, who has no choice but to accede to professional judgment (Greenwood, 1957).

While the case for the inviolability of the professional is dramatically overstated here (along the lines suggested by Becker, 1970), it is just this authority which attracted the Vista City teachers.

When teachers talked about parents' visiting classrooms to observe teachers in order to submit a preference to the principal for the following year, they described the practice as "shopping around for the teacher." Most strongly wished the practice would cease. Teachers wanted the parents to act like old-fashioned clients rather than like customers, for the parents' behavior said to the teachers, "You are not a professional."

In a study of rural teachers, the author suggests that teachers separated community stereotypes of teaching from individual invasions of their teaching territory, such as parents made. They could do this, McPherson (1972) suggests, because the teachers held similar stereotypes about themselves. The teachers at Vista City, however, did not all hold these stereotypes, or if they did have them, they made a conscious effort to get rid of them. They tended, consequently, to associate more closely community stereotypes about teaching with problems they had in their work, i.e., with parents, curriculum controversies, the principal and the district--in sum with a host of intraschool and extraschool concerns.

Kate Bridges suggested that teachers do not have built into their occupational image the expectations that they will have control over their working lives. They do not expect:

> to feel that "this is my school and what I think about and the values I think are important and the teaching approaches that I think are important and the ways of relating to parents that I feel are important" are going to be taken seriously. And that as a staff we will come to a decision about what this school means to us and will be like.

Bridges felt that teachers needed to develop this sense as a group. She could point to individual teachers with this idea, but not to the school staff as a whole.

Problematically, the professional model many women teaching at Vista City sought to dignify and enhance their social status formed a wedge that will stunt long-term development of a satisfying work setting because it:

1) Interferes with the construction of cooperative relationships with the lay community (parents--particularly mothers) so that parents and teachers become adversaries rather than partners;

2) Feeds the tensions which for many teachers arise out of the uneasy coexistence of love, concern for and interest in their students, on the one hand, and on the other, a dissatisfaction with certain working conditions of schools, particularly bureaucracy, feelings of vulnerability, and powerlessness.

3) Leaves unresolved the basic question of gender. It cannot question the social devaluation of women's work. It simply attempts to change the nature of the category.

Teachers analyze their vulnerability correctly. The role of the school has changed dramatically in the past one hundred and fifty years. Schools are now expected to teach much more than basic skills, and they have carried the weight of these expectations since the Progressive Era. Expectations of teachers are high, but the corresponding authority to act to meet these expectations is not forthcoming.

The quandry for teachers is that if teaching continues to be defined as "women's work" it must accept the social devaluation of that label. Consequently, teachers will not gain autonomy. Christine

Bart said that when her husband originally expressed interest in entering teaching, she tried to discourage him, because at the time she "didn't see it as a job for a man."

We recall the words of Susan B. Anthony:

> It seems to me you fail to comprehend the cause of the disrespect of which you complain. Do you not see that so long as society says woman has not brains enough to be a doctor, lawyer, or minister, but has plenty to be a teacher, every man of you who condescends to teach tacitly admits before all Israel and the sun that he has no more brains than a woman? (Curti, 1935: 190).

The social context has changed since 1852. Now society "knows" that women have the brains to be doctors, lawyers and sometimes ministers. Those who go into teaching, then, must be ordinary women. Do ordinary women deserve autonomy in their work? The nature of the debate changes.

CHAPTER 5

THE QUEST FOR COMMUNITY

In my first interview with a teacher, I asked Kate Bridges what made a good atmosphere in a school. She did not hesitate a moment to reply, "One of the central things is the fact of colleagueship in working together as a teaching community." Kate's views were echoed by many other teachers.[1]

At the same time that the teachers wanted some autonomy in their work (as discussed in Chapter 4), they also expressed a desire for a sense of community. Independence was what they wanted in certain areas of decision-making; they wanted to choose curriculum, they wanted to be able to change the patterns of the day or bend the rules for a particular child if it seemed appropriate. They also wanted a certain quality

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[1] In fieldwork, a good interview, whenever it comes, plays an enormously important role in shaping the themes which guide the study. Good interviews can come at any time, and the particular time plays a crucial role in determining how the interview will be used. If good interviews filled with acute observations come near the end of fieldwork, they may link bits and pieces showing how issues that never before appeared to be related, are in fact related. If a good interview comes right at the beginning of fieldwork, however, it may provide a path down which one wanders for further investigation. (Hopefully, the single fieldwork experience provides good interviews at both ends of the study).

In this case, we had the luck to start off the project with an informant who had rich data and acute observations. She provided a path down which this researcher wandered. The data collected along this path served as the basis for this chapter on the importance and nature of community in the lives of elementary schoolteachers at Vista City Elementary.

and kind of relationship with the other teachers with whom they worked. Though their colleagues did not offer the only opportunity for community-building, it was with their colleagues that the teachers wanted stronger relationships.

While Kate had used the word "community" directly, it was not often used by other teachers to describe the kind of relationship with each other that they sought. They did, however, have a certain kind of relationship with each other in mind. Although they employed other terms, what they described seemed to be a psychological sense of community. In the next section of this chapter, we will define a psychological sense of community more fully.

The term community fit what the teachers described even though it was only used--and not even in just the right sense--by Kate Bridges. The language the teachers used varied from the pedestrian to the mystical, including words like, "bonding," "vision," "intellectual exchange," "colleagueship," "family," "teaming," "friends." The range was broad.

We could have used "colleagueship" to describe something that the teachers said was important in their lives. While teachers employed this term frequently to describe an important part of their working lives, the term is not quite broad enough to cover the same territory as community. Is colleagueship adequate to describe the help a friend provides to a new teacher to help her cope with her first terrified months in an urban classroom? Does it fit a teacher's frequent defense of a colleague whose teaching style many of the school's teachers disapprove?

Community is also an important term in the new scholarship on women. Research from a variety of disciplinary perspectives has explored the importance of community in the lives of women, whether in the context of moral decision-making (Gilligan, 1982), in relation to battered women (Harmann and Ross, 1978), or American female historians (Sklar, 1975). Lerner (1980) has suggested that women create community even when "confined by patriarchal restraint." Other examples include: Auerbach (1973), Blair (1980), Cott (1977), Smith-Rosenberg (1975), and Zimmerman (1979).

DEFINING S OF C[illegible]ITY

When we talk about teachers experiencing a sense of community,[2] we are talking about a psychological sense of community, that is, "the sense that one (is) part of a readily available, mutually supportive network of relationships upon which one (can) depend and as a result of which one (does) not experience sustained feelings of loneliness" (Sarason, 1974:1). It can also be described as an awareness of sharing a way of life (Peshkin, 1[illegible]).

What does this psychological sense of community supply to people? It provides a sense of belonging ("I am a part of this school"); it means supportiveness ("others will support me if I am in trouble"); it includes sharing ("I will share materials; I will be help and be helped"); and it means validation ("my views and values are important"). These features increase the morale level of a school. Since high morale is a goal in most schools, these feelings may be among the most important for peers to experience.

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[2] "Community" has been an important subject in sociology. One of the major areas of disagreement has been whether a community must refer to a shared location. Paul Goodman referred to "the community of scholars", when scholarship rather than a single university setting was shared. Feminists have likewise used the term community to refer to women across the country with whom values are shared. Here, we refer to both a shared physical location--the school building--as well as an emotional sense of togetherness. The physical community was only partly realized. The teachers worked together, but they lived in different communities.

The teachers, as we have said, shared a physical community as well. They worked in the same building, shared supplies, worked under the same principal, dealt with the same kinds of parents. Whether the physical plant or the shared ordeals created community is a matter that is specific to each school. While all teachers experienced school life, the life itself may not have led to a sense of community (see, for example, Sarason, 1966; Sarason, 1972).

The Teachers' Definitions

Certain experiences and qualities of school life provided teachers with a sense of community. These are not ingredients in a recipe; they do not all have to be present at the same time for "community" to work. To have some of them is essential. The teachers felt that they were part of a community when they shared common values with some of their coworkers, when they had some input into school policy, when other members of the teaching staff were friendly and welcoming, when they were on a good team, and when their colleagues supported them at critical times.

The kind of community teachers considered ideal, and the kind for which they were willing to settle, differed. Their more tempered versions were forged out of the realities of a city school system. A chance to gossip in the lunch room, as we shall see, was not what the teachers defined as a good atmosphere. A good discussion about politics, children or books might suffice. While their ideal might have involved "bonding," all readily admitted that only like-minded souls could bond; hence they were skeptical about its potential in a financially troubled school system.

What they searched for, in terms of community, depended on what kind of teacher they were. If we imagine teachers' attitudes toward their work lying on a continuum, we can identify each end. What aspect of their work is most salient for them? At one end of the continuum are teachers who see their work involving a host of responsibilities and interests. They are interested in committee work, certain administrative tasks and the like. The children, their students, are only one part of that job. Other parts include paper work, meetings, collegial interactions. These other parts are considered intrinsic parts of the job. Teachers at this end of the continuum may excel at their work, be ordinary or poor teachers.

At the other end of the continuum are teachers whose focus is more directly and consistently around the children. They like being with children--they "love" that part of their work. They take children, their needs, development, feelings, very seriously. All other aspects of the job are secondary--for them, teaching means their students. Paperwork detracts from one's teaching; it is not considered intrinsic to the work. Some of these teachers have philosophized about what education should be for children, and they are in teaching because of a commitment to these philosophies. These teachers have more difficulty assimilating "bad parts" of their life outside the classroom. The teachers at this end of the continuum tend to be highly committed teachers. The principal often worried that they would "burn out" because they gave so much of themselves to their work.

Teachers at both ends of the continuum wanted community in the school. They described it, however, in different terms. The teachers with a more "integrated" view of their work used more ordinary language to describe the community they sought. They used words like "talking," and "teaming" to refer to experiences. The teachers with the more singular focus on children used more visionary language to describe their views. They wanted to share intellectual experiences or ideas around children. "Communing" and "bonding" can more nearly be equated with their hopes.

Teachers with the more integrated view did not always feel that every single minute of the day counted. They would go out of their way to engage in small talk if they wanted to convince a teacher to do something. The other teachers were much more like "loners." They considered every minute of the day essential. They did not engage in what they called "politicking," for politicking involved more small talk than they were willing to engage in. Since the primary goal of "the loners" was unmistakably to be a great teacher, they centered all their energies on this goal. Little time was left over for "politicking." Community-building was a different matter for them because a sense of community would, they felt, make them better teachers. We will see this more clearly as we discuss the specific building blocks of community.

Community--With Whom?

Though their colleagues did not offer the only opportunity for community-build[illegible] it was with their colleagues that the teachers generally wanted stronger relationships. The opportunity to build relationships with parents in the physical community surrounding the school did not impress most of the women as great. We have discussed some of the reasons for this in Chapter 4. Teachers did indeed want good relationships with parents but there were clear parameters to the relationship. As Christine Bart said, "Teaching children is really something where you have to team with the parents, but teachers must not feel like they and the parents have an equal say in what goes on in the school." As long as parents did not overstep their bounds, the relationship remained friendly.

There was one major exception to this general view. Special education teachers often had a closer relationship with the parents of the children in their classes than did the teachers of typical children. Many of them needed to work closely with the parents in order to develop federally required I.E.P.s. When they were not able to meet with parents to develop the I.E.P.s, they were critical of the parents' lack of involvement in the lives of their children.

A more specific case of teachers seeking strong relationships with parents could be seen in the classrooms of teachers who taught classes of typical children integrated with a few autistic children. In these cases, the teachers often became very friendly with the parents of the autistic children. There were several reasons for this. First, the program was in many ways experimental in the public school system. While children with autism had been integrated in a federally funded model private school in Vista City, it had never been done under the direction of the city school system before. Both teachers and parents were caught up in the excitement of the experiment. Second, while a number of supports were built into the program, it was a difficult job. The principal, who actively supported the program, talked about the number of boxes of tissues that had been used up the first year. Third, in this particular case, the two teachers of these special classes did not get along at all. Dana Barrett felt she could never turn to the other teacher who was in the same situation as she was, because she did not get along with him. Fourth, the

parents of the autistic children were very supportive of the teachers. The teaching of Dana Barrett, for example, was glowingly described in an article in a state special education publication. The special education offices in the district did not send her a copy of the article. One of the parents of an autistic child in her class happened to get the publication and brought it in for her. The teacher really appreciated the parent's support.

In general, however, no matter how friendly a teacher's relationship with the parents of children in her class, it was to other teachers that she looked for a sense of community. In the next section we examine the building blocks of community within the school. We look first at the institutionalized features of school life, and second at the interpersonal methods teachers used.

COMMUNITY BUILDING BLOCKS

Certain features of school life had the potential to promote a sense of community among teachers. Whether they did so, in fact, depended upon a number of factors. Some of these features were an institutionalized part of Vista City Elementary. Others were simply activities in which teachers engaged during the course of the day. In this section we examine both the formal and informal mechanisms for enhancing community.

Institutionalized Mechanisms

Three institutionalized features of school life offered the potential for building community: teams, faculty meetings, and the teachers' lounge.

Teams. Vista City Elementary was organized into grade-level teams. Teams were supposed to meet at least two Monday afternoons per month.[3] Formally, then, each grade level was part of a team. Teachers distinguished,

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[3] The other two Mondays were sometimes used for faculty council meetings or school-wide faculty meetings.

however, between being on a team, and teaming. Everyone was on a team because that is how the school was organized. Team members talked with each other and shared ideas about teaching. But the sharing of ideas was only one aspect of teaming. For the upper grades, particularly, the other aspect was sharing children for reading and perhaps for other subjects. Kindergarten and first grades did not send students to each other, but they and everyone else considered them a team.

The fifth grade was a team, but they were not teaming. Maria Johnson, a fifth grade teacher, had been out for almost the whole first semester recovering from an operation. Hence, she had a self-contained classroom. She said that while she is still "on a team with Dana," she is not teaming because at the fifth grade level, "teaming definitely means sharing kids." She said that even though there were "good things and bad things about teaming," that it was no perfect answer, it was helpful. The good things were that "you had fewer levels to prepare for"; the bad thing was that you "had more kids to deal with." She missed teaming this year because she had twenty levels of reading in her self-contained classroom and it was very difficult. Her friendship with Dana was important to her, and they planned activities together, as we discuss later, but she missed not being able to team, i.e. share kids.

Good teams meant that individual teachers could develop strong bonds with one another. Teachers often described years on a particularly good team as, "the best years of my working life." Sometimes teachers used superlative language to describe a particular teaming experience as offering a "fantastic sense of colleagueship."

What made a team "good"? Teachers had a very clear conception of this. Barbara Timmitts, who was one of the teachers to use superlatives to describe her team experience, gave four reasons for the high quality of their team: the team members had all been hard workers--"you could count on us to be the last ones out of the building"; they shared ideas and materials with each other; they had similar values about education; and finally, they enjoyed each other's company--they were friends.

Not all the teams shared values or enjoyed each other's friendship. If they did not share values, however, they at least respected each other's approach.

The principal affirmed this view when she commented that to be a good team, members had to respect each other and their teaching styles. We describe examples in Chapter 6 of teams in which respect was not present. Lisa Novak and Sandra Miller describe examples of the conflicts they faced.

Lisa Novak, while unhappy with her present team, recalled a "wonderful team" she had been on at a previous school. It was so good because the team members "really talked" to each other, and they exchanged kids that were difficult. They developed a support system for each other. If a child was too difficult for a teacher to handle, another teacher would take him or her for awhile (they did not believe in leaving a child unsupervised out in the hall).

Dana Barrett echoed the importance of teachers helping each other with difficult children when she described her "fantastic" team experiences with Maria Johnson and Barbara Dimitts. She said that their team had shared problems. When Maria had an "impossible child," she and Maria took turns sharing the child "so it wasn't too bad for anybody." She added that another important part of the teaming experience had been the exciting projects the team had initiated. She and Maria Johnson still did some innovative things together that stimulated their interest in teaching.

Instead of having a Valentine's Day party, for example, they sponsored a Susan B. Anthony party to celebrate the anniversary of her birth on February 15th. All the fifth grade children in three of the classes dressed up as famous Americans. Many of the girls were dressed up as women who had played a role in the suffrage movement. Everyone in the room stood up and introduced him- or herself and said for what he or she was known. The party was videotaped. The principal attended and commented to this observer how creative the party was. The event was exciting not only to the children, but also to the teachers. It was renewing.

The sixth grade team also described themselves and were described by others as a "good team." Three team members used similar language to account for its high quality. Sylvia Richardson said: "We do have a really good team. None of us are new teachers.

We've all been teaching a while. We know our own strengths and weaknesses." She added that they were "flexible" and shared information and help with each other. Just that day, she explained, Meg Dinker had done the "legwork" on the new basal readers. She had gone to the meeting on the readers at another school, looked them all over, and was going to share what she had learned with them.

Bernice Smith described herself as part of a "great team" with reasons that were similar to Sylvia's. She said, "We are not competitive, we all support each other, we all agree that there is not one right way to teach, and we all have a lot of experience." The sixth grade team had different teaching styles, so they had to give each other space to teach in one's chosen style. At the same time, they respected each other's approach.

Amelia Dickenson also emphasized the "respect" each team member felt for the other. She described the four members of her team as "different." Two of them were "easy going" and two of them were strict, so they "balanced each other out." The other qualities she included to account for the quality of the team included their "frankness" with each other and that they were all "hard working."

Like the sixth grade team, the fourth grade team considered themselves, and were considered by others, a good team. They were supportive of each other, they liked to meet for meetings to discuss issues, and they were willing to make compromises in order to work out difficult situations. They were faced with an awkward arrangement of classes that were not near to each other (two were on one floor and two were on another). Additionally, they did not all have the same lunch hour, so they were not able to use the lunch hour to meet and talk.

Their lack of time together bothered fourth grade team members, and so they tried to meet as many Monday afternoons as possible. At team meetings this observer attended, the fourth grade teachers exhibited great support for each other. Sara Jacobs, for example, said to Jennie McAuliffe during a discussion of a particularly difficult project their team was doing:

> Oh, I know you'll be just wonderful. You don't have to plan every little thing, Jennie. Just get the idea of what you want to do and you'll go in there and do it wonderfully. You're just wonderful with the kids!

The team members respected each other's teaching ability and offered supportive statements to exhibit those feelings.

Sarah Jacobs had encouraged Jennie, but she was worried about her part as well. The fourth grade was participating in a special life skills curriculum project that was sponsored by the district social studies committee. When Sarah complained, Heather Samuels, another team member, said to the group, "Well, it's all hectic now and I know it all seems like a jumble, but in the end it will come out all right." She then turned to Sarah and said, "You know, your part of the program will go very well. You're just so fantastic with the children."

Sixth grade team members emphasized the importance of team meetings as well. Amelia Dickenson said that not only did they have frequent "formal" team meetings, but they met "informally" as well every day either at lunch time or at the end of the day. The sixth grade, Amelia said, was filled with "many interesting personalities," and the teachers often spent time together talking about their students.

Sylvia Richardson described it this way. She said that the sixth grade team usually had lunch together. "We relax with each other and our way of relaxing is to talk about what happened during the morning. And sometimes we need to just get angry and explode about a kid. If we can get it off our chests, we won't hold it against the kid all afternoon."

Teams that functioned well spent time together. In order to spend time together they had to enjoy each other's company. The teams that did want to spend time together were seen as good teams, those that did not had different characterizations. Good teams benefitted their members. They offered members a sense of community.

Jessica Bonwit did not feel that her team was strong, and she wished it was. She felt that her team had problems because the chair of the team, Jean Webster, had been teaching for so long that she had "gone stale." Jean was no longer interested in holding team meetings to discuss new things that they might try. Additionally, Jessica had some strong disagreement with her team. She did not believe, she said, in holding kids back at the kindergarten level,

and she is the only team member with this philosophy toward the retention policy. She tries to be "very low key" about the issue with her team because she wants to keep an "easy" relationship with them. The philosophical disagreement could not, however, be hidden. Individuals had said to her, "You're going to ruin the kid." Jessica felt she could not retain a kindergarten child in her class because, "I feel that if you fail the kid from the beginning, then the kid loses all chances to learn." Jessica said that in spite of the differences she had with her team, she needed the relationships: "I really don't have anyone to talk with on issues and I feel very isolated. You know, I disagree philosophically with my team members on some issues but I do want to get along with them because I need at least that level of friendship."

Teams had the potential to cement teachers' relationships and provide a sense of community. They eased some of the burdens particular to teaching. They did not always live up to their potential, however. They were complicated by the quality of the relationships teachers were able to build with each other. And whether relationships were possible, was sometimes a matter of luck. When teachers who were not on the same team liked each other and wanted to work together, they could apply to teach on a team together. If there were enough spaces free at a single grade level, their efforts would be rewarded.

Teachers' Meetings. The subject of teachers' meetings was frequently raised as a subject of complaint among teachers. We discuss this issue in Chapter 5 for the conflict it reveals between the teachers and the principal. We cannot avoid this conflict in this chapter.

Many teachers commented on the importance of good teachers' meetings for building a strong community spirit at the school. Kate Bridges took a strong view:

> I am very upset about the policy of teachers' meetings which is basically not to have them. To me, a teachers' meeting is a bonding: it is a time for teachers to get together and talk about issues that are crucial to them.

Her view was echoed by Jessica Dolwit, Christine Hart, Sandra Miller, Amelia Dickenson, and Lisa Novak in very similar language. Teachers who may have hotly disagreed on other topics, were united on this one.

The teachers knew that their perspective on meetings differed from that of June Robinson's, the principal. They felt that June did not call teachers' meetings because she felt teachers would see it as more work. As Christine Bart said, however, "Actually what teachers really want is more communication, but we don't end up having it."

In an interview, June's reason for not calling meetings was a little different. As she saw it, teachers preferred adults to children: "Teachers are very scared to talk and interact with adults. Look at the kinds of people who go into education. I think that they basically feel more comfortable with kids than with adults." Calling frequent meetings would thus be a burden on the teachers.

What did teachers feel more faculty meetings would offer them? Christine Bart said that meetings would enable teachers to "have more input in the school." Kate Bridges agreed when she said, "As a faculty we have so little sense that this is our school. We don't discuss questions like, ought there to be more or less discipline or art? -- you name it. So we don't know whether we have a view on it." More meetings would mean as the teachers saw it, that they would have more control, or "input."

Sandra Miller also wanted the opportunity to discuss issues related to teaching at meetings. As she said, "What we did at staff meetings this year could be done in formal memos." She wanted more of a "workshop atmosphere," more intellectual discussions about key issues. She thought it would be helpful, for example, to have a discussion about moral education. "It would be an impersonal way of dealing with the differences that we have. Like, Mr. Mearns (a fifth grade teacher), Jessica (Bonwit), and I are on one side, and Mrs. Bart and some other people are on the other."

Teachers felt, then, that faculty meetings offered a great opportunity to build community at the school. They were critical of the principal for not calling more meetings, and for using the ones that were held to pass out information rather than create dialogue. Many teachers attributed the lack of community they felt to the lack of faculty meetings.

The Teachers' Room. Almost every school has a teachers' room (see Hall, 1972 for a description of what is sometimes said to pass for one). Teachers' rooms provide a physical space for teachers to get together with other adults during times when they are not with children. As Sylvia Richardson said, the sixth grade team used their lunch hours to meet together in the teachers' room and talk about events of the morning.

Like the existence of teams, the existence of the teachers' room had the potential to serve as a place for teachers to meet with each other. Whether it did or not depended on individual teachers and on some particular features of the school. After we examine these factors, we will contrast the use of the teachers' room at lunch time at Vista City with its use at the same time at Archduke.

The teachers' room at Vista City was a room that opened off the cafeteria which was in the basement of the building. It looked like a basement room even under the disguise of cheery blue paint and the brightly colored curtains that hung over the small ceiling-level windows. The room had five school cafeteria tables with chairs around them. A couch and some lounging chairs were grouped along one wall. Next to the couch, a telephone for teachers' use sat on a small end table. Across the room from the couch, a mural of different kinds of vegetation--trees, flowers, and plants--had been painted on top of the blue wall. A bathroom had been built into the room on the wall with the mural; it had been put in after the building was built because it stuck out into the room, taking up the corner space. On the other wall adjoining the bathroom, notices from the Vista City Teachers Association (VCTA) had been hung. A refrigerator, a large coffee urn, and a coke machine completed the furnishings.

Teachers could use the teachers' room any time when they were free. Some teachers frequented the room, others rarely stepped inside. The room offered space where adults could talk with other adults. Who took advantage of it?

The group that used the room most frequently were the smokers. Teachers who smoked could be found in the lounge before school, during each break, at lunch time, and after school. Teachers who smoked often found themselves developing relationships with other teachers not on their team simply because they

both smoked and needed space for their habit. They were thrown together because of a part of their lives that had no relation to teaching.

Teachers who did not smoke, and who did not like smoke-filled rooms, often stayed away from the teachers' room just for that reason. Perhaps because of the room's location in the basement of the building, the air in there quickly filled with smoke after the sorties of the early morning smokers. By lunch time, the room hung heavy with smoke. Lisa Novak, a vegetarian non-smoker, said that she would not go near the teachers' room because she "hates smoke and gossip." Kate Bridges shared Lisa's view. She said she "couldn't stand the smoke. By lunch the place is just like a garage. Unbelievable!"

Whether a teacher smoked was not the only factor that determined teachers' room use. Schedules also played a role. The lunch period was divided into four time periods, starting at 11:15. The last group started lunch at 12:30 when the 11:15ers were long gone. If colleagues on different teams had a different schedule, you might not have the opportunity to see them in the teachers' lounge. As Christine Bart said, "Who you end up seeing here is determined by whether you smoke or not and whether or not you share the same breaks."

There were other issues involved in the use of the room. Some nonsmokers did not have a strong reaction to the smoke, and never mentioned it as part of their concerns about the teachers' room. Teachers who spent as much of the day as they could with other team members looked forward to lunch with team members in the teachers' room. Even Kate Bridges said that were schedules different, so that "there was enough colleagueship available," she would "batter down my resistance and go there, even though it's (the smoke) really repellant to me."

Some teachers stayed away from the teachers' room because they wanted to use the time to correct papers to return to the children. The teachers in this group were those whose focus was consistently on the children. They often did not like to "waste" any time during the day.

Some teachers also described themselves as loners. They felt that they "gave" so much out to the kids in the morning, that they needed a little time to

themselves to get "renewed." They would sometimes invite a single teacher whom they liked to their room for lunch. Lisa Novak, who described herself as "somewhat of a loner," had invited Kate Bridges to her room on occasion. When Kate Bridges had gone on sabattical leave for a semester, Lisa had a difficult time because "the one person I really liked to talk to was away."

Sandra Miller spent her lunch break with her first graders. She explained its value:

> I don't take a break for lunch because I really like to eat with the kids on the grounds that for forty minutes or a half hour they don't have to take orders from an aide: "You can go to the bathroom. No, you can't." I just sit next to them. I tell them to bring their library books down and I kind of circulate, have a couple of them sit on my lap, maybe read them a story. They have the feeling that you're reading their story just to them. And that those five other pairs of ears listening is okay.

Sandra feels that time with the children at lunch is more important than her time spent in the teachers' room.

For Sandra, as for some of the other teachers, what happens in the teachers' room at lunch time is not pleasurable. She considers the conversation mere gossip. "That's really why I don't eat lunch in the teachers' room. It isn't a professional setting." She compared it unfavorably to the English school where she taught the previous year. There, the staff room had also been the teachers' library.

The teachers' room was a place where many kinds of activities occurred. While some of the teachers did engage in chit-chat over lunch, others conducted team business. Dana Barrett and Maria Johnson often discussed feminist issues in the community. Again, a teacher's individual schedule played an important role in determining how one experienced the room.

Some teachers went to the teachers' room even though they were disappointed with what occurred there. Carrie Amundsen, for example, criticized those teachers who did not go there, even though she wished that teachers would "talk politics" or have

dialogue on more intellectual issues than did those who shared her schedule. She said, "I don't understand those teachers who eat lunch in their rooms and never interact with anybody else. I don't think it's a good model of teaching because it's not renewing."

The principal, although she never ate in the teachers' room, wished that all the teachers would. "I feel teachers really ought to eat in the teachers' room. They get to spend time with each other. They shouldn't spend their lunch hours by themselves working."

The teachers' room served a useful purpose in community building, only as it related to other factors of teaching life, particularly the lunch schedules. Tension among team members also played a role. Teams with members who had many disagreements with each other avoided spending time together. For them, the teachers' room became a place to avoid. During lunch particularly, teachers' needed to prepare themselves emotionally for the afternoon; hot disagreements among colleagues or the tension generated from avoiding unspoken conflicts did not offer this preparation.

The use of the teachers' room at Archduke during the lunch hour varied considerably from its use at Vista City. At Archduke, the teachers' room is a light airy room on the building's second floor. The door is always open.[4] Two school cafeteria tables with chairs around each of them were placed in the center of the room. Along one wall were two couches. There was a bathroom which, like the one at Vista City, was clearly an addition.

The atmosphere in the Archduke teachers' room was informal. Teachers often shouted back and forth across the two tables to one another, telling jokes and swearing. On one occasion, a teacher told a story about a student who was embarrassed in front of his whole class for something that he did. Another teacher

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[4] At Vista City Elementary, the door to the teachers' room is always closed. The outside of the door, which is in the cafeteria sports a sign which reads, "Children, Do Not Enter Unless You Knock!"

said, "Boy, I'm glad that happened to him. He's a real shit!" Another teacher became suddenly conscious of the presence of an observer and said to the group, "We talk about the kids so lovingly, don't we?" The teacher who had sworn about the kid then reitereated, "Well, he is a real shit."

In addition to the informality, groups that formed around lunch tables were not as insulated as at Vista City. As illustrated in the above example, teachers often talked to each other back and forth across tables. It was as if they were all having lunch together. At Vista City, on the other hand, when particular groups occupied a table, other groups did not feel welcomed to join them.

Another difference between the use of the two lunchrooms, was the focus of conversation. At Archduke it was almost always entirely focused on children or work. It was as if the lunch period were used for clinical consultation.[5] Teachers often talked about problems teachers in other grade levels were having, offering their advice or comments on a matter. Sometimes, a teacher would ask her colleagues at the table what they knew about a particular child or child's family. One day, the teachers discussed Carlos Ortez, who had that morning been swearing at one of the teachers in Spanish. The teacher could not understand what was going on, but another bilingual child in the class did know. He came and reported it to one of the teacher's assistants (called a TA Sub) who was Puerto Rican.

All the teachers at the table knew of Carlos. They all participated in the discussion of how difficult this particular child was because he lied frequently and "absolutely played the young innocent" no matter

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[5] Seymour Sarason (1972) has suggested that teachers need time to engage in the "case conference." This is a model of discussion used by psychiatrists to consult with each other about their cases. It would give teachers a chance to talk about their problems with children. To this observer, it appeared that teachers at Archduke used their lunch hour for just this purpose. The sixth grade team at Vista City seemed to do so as well.

what he did, whether it was stealing, peeing in the hall, hitting someone, or knocking his fist through a window. The teacher whose class he had disrupted that morning asked if anyone knew his family. There was some discussion about who his family was because the school had several Ortez families and the families were really different. In one Ortez family, a teacher said, the "mother is really on top of what is happening to her kids," but the mother in the other Ortez family was not. Carlos, they figured out, was part of the second Ortez family.

What caused the difference in atmospheres in the two teachers' rooms is difficult to pinpoint. Several factors probably played a role. First, Archduke was a smaller school than Vista City. Half its size, Archduke had fewer teachers as well as fewer students, so it was easier for teachers to get to know each other. Second, the school was located in a very poor neighborhood. The teachers felt that they faced great environmental odds in their attempts to educate the children. This sense of being in battle united the teachers in their efforts. It created a sense of community.

Teams, faculty meetings, and the teachers' room were institutionalized features of school life. The role they played in enhancing community depended on whether and how the faculty and administration took advantage of them.

Interpersonal Methods

The development of a sense of community at a school depended on more than the formal aspects of school organization. It also depended on the informal, interpersonal ways that staff members supported and related to one another. In this section we discuss three of these methods, helping, talking, and defending.

Helping. When teachers helped each other out, they contributed to building community in the school. The teacher who was helped felt she had a network of people with whom she was connected, and upon whom she could rely. We discussed examples of helping as it occurred on teams earlier. Dana Barrett, for example, described how she and Maria Johnson shared a difficult child who was in Maria's class so that he would not be

too great a burden on Maria. There were many other examples of teachers reaching out to help other teachers.

When Heather Samuels first came to Vista City she had just completed her first year of teaching. She described the earlier class and school as bucolic, commenting, "I never had to raise my voice the whole year." During Heather's first year at Vista City, however, the school was undergoing what everyone referred to as its "transition year." Another city school had been closed and Vista City Elementary had absorbed most of its students. It was the former principal's last year, and she was sharing the principalship with June Robinson. There were a number of racial conflicts in the school, and the city had stationed guards in the hallway outside the fifth and sixth grade classrooms. Heather described her experience:

> When I came here I was, as you can imagine, a very naive and protected person. I found myself right in the middle of this incredible atmosphere and I didn't know what to do. Imagine me having come from a great year where I never had to raise my voice once. I'm suddenly in the middle of all these kids who are hitting each other and beating on each other, getting after me, and calling me all kinds of names that I'd never heard before like "fucking this" and "fucking that" and I didn't know what to do.

As Heather tells it, she would not have remained in teaching without help from other teachers. "Mark Cabrini helped me to survive that year. The other person who helped me to survive was Sylvia Richardson."

Heather, in turn, played a similar role for Jennie McAuliffe, who took over the class of a teacher who left the city to marry someone in the middle of the year. Jennie described the experience:

> Miss Rudge was tall, beautiful and slender, and her students just loved her. They wondered WHO WAS THIS taking over their beloved teacher's class. Miss Rudge had the kids wrapped around her little finger, and they didn't care two cents for me. It was the first time that I ever had a situation where the kids didn't love me. Without Heather Samuels I don't know what I would have done.

Teachers recalled the importance of help during their first year at the school.

Sandra Miller was experiencing her first year, and wished that someone had helped her more on such issues as testing when she first came. As she described it, "Now I have things under control, but nobody came along and said, 'You're new in this system. Would you like me to tell you how these level tests work?' or anything. We don't have systems like that."

Sandra did find the help of Barbara Timmitts, the instructional specialist, very important. Sandra had worried because she was the last person on her team giving levels tests, and had felt threatened when another teacher said to her, "Aren't you finished with your testing yet?" Barbara Timmitts offered her advice:

> Barbara said to me, "Sandra, don't worry about that. I was the same. If you're teaching and instructing to the very last minute, you don't do those levels tests till the very last minute, and people whose levels tests are finished three weeks before the end of the year look very organized. They're looking after themselves, don't forget, and not necessarily the children." And I just breathed a sigh of relief.

It was part of Barbara's role as the school's instructional specialist to consult on instructional issues with individual teachers. It was her interpersonal style, however, which comforted Sandra. They shared important values. As Sandra said, "And I have Barbara who just always understands what I'm talking about."

Carrie Amundsen also interpreted her role as resource room teacher in a manner that proved especially helpful to the teachers. She chose to interact with teachers in a helpful manner. She thought teachers liked her a lot, she said, because she really made an effort to get along with them. She was very flexible, for example, with the teachers about what times their kids come to her room. And when a teacher says to her, "God, I've just had it with this kid," she will say, "Well, let him come down to my class and I'll do some work with him." So she tried to make herself "very available" to the teachers. Carrie's helpfulness was expressed through her interpersonal style.

Christine Hart also contributed to a sense of community among colleagues when she helped Charlotte Royce join the renovation committee (see Chapter 6). She advised and counseled Charlotte about strategies to use with June Robinson. She commiserated with Charlotte's disappointment over June's unwillingness to appoint her to the committee. She supported Charlotte by bringing Charlotte to the renovation committee meeting anyway. Christine's helpfulness culminated in success for Charlotte Royce. She got on the committee and enjoyed her experiences there.

Teachers helping one another reinforced the sense that Vista City Elementary is an interconnected unit, a community where people care about one another.

Talking. Another vehicle for creating community was the talking that friends did with one another. Some of the teachers went to a local bar every Friday afternoon. When marriages, the arrival of children, or other responsibilities halted this habit, the teacher would often complain that she missed going. Amy Michaels, for instance, said that before she had her baby, she "never even thought about going home on Friday afternoon." Jennie McAuliffe had cut down on the number of Fridays she joined the group at O'Flaherty's as well since she had gotten married. Her husband was a law student and was often home on Friday afternoons.

Group friendships were only one kind of socializing that occurred at Vista City, however. Many friendships between individual people strengthened the feelings teachers had for the school. Heather Samuels and Jennie McAuliffe were very close, spending time together after school each day. Maria Johnson and Dana Barrett were also personal friends; they shared an interest in feminist issues. Dana felt able to talk to Maria about her concerns with her divorce. Carrie Amundsen was friendly with the principal, June Robinson. She said that June felt free to discuss her work problems openly because she knew that Carrie would not share what she knew. Lisa Novak counted on the friendship of Kate Bridges, and missed what the friendship provided her when Kate was on leave.

The friendships people experienced at the school heightened their sense of connection with some of the people with whom they worked. If there were people present who they could count on understanding the

problems that concerned them, they felt buoyant. These friendships were emotionally nourishing to the people who experienced them. A teacher experienced great relief if she were able to go to the room of another teacher after school who was a good friend and say, "You wouldn't believe what happened to me today!"

The content of the friendship sometimes bridged the gap between personal and work-related concerns. Some friendships, like Sandra Miller's and Jessica Bonwit's, remained on the level of school-centered issues. Others, like Heather Samuel's and Jennie McAuliffe's included personal matters in their lives as well.

Defending. There was another interpersonal method that teachers sometimes used, the effects of which were to heighten community. When a teacher verbally defended another teacher whose style others were criticizing, she effectively kept the criticized teacher within the circle of the school. The effect of criticism was to ostracize the offending teacher. Whoever chose to defend the offender refused to allow a successful resolution to this attempt.

The case of Sandra Miller was particularly noticeable. She was often criticized by other teachers for the "openness" of her style. Some other teachers thought that her classroom was too noisy, and that the activities occuring there were too disorganized. Lisa Novak referred to her as "a space cadet." She commented, "She lets them do too much playing at the beginning of the year." Sandra, herself, described some of her conflicts with Christine Bart (see Chapter 5).

Jessica Bonwit always came to Sandra's defense. She said she gets "very upset" when other faculty members cannot see Sandra's strengths. "I always defend Sandra, and I always will," she remarked. She also wanted to make certain that Sandra did not feel too isolated, so often at the end of the day, and every morning, she went to Sandra's room to say hello just so Sandra would know she was there. She liked Sandra a lot, she said, because they "shared educational values." She described Sandra as "a very humane teacher. There's always the hum of noise in her class because she individualizes reading for each of her children. When I go to look for a class for my own kids, I look for humanity in the classroom, and I think you'll really find that in Sandra's class."

Sandra was not the only teacher who had a colleague who would come to her defense. Lisa Novak commented that some teachers criticized Christine Bart, as well, for her style. As she put it, "There's a lot of backbiting around Christine because people think she always manages to wangle her way to getting the good kids in her class. But that is not what really happens. Christine is a really good teacher and the reason good kids end up coming out of Christine's class is that she teaches them well." Lisa defended Christine when she heard other teachers criticize her because she believed the criticism was unjustified.

We have purposely separated "defending" from other aspects of friendship because it was so consciously executed at Vista City. A teacher had to be willing to contradict her peers in order to defend a teacher whom others disapproved. For teachers who often had difficulty expressing disagreement with a group, to engage in defense sometimes appeared as such a risk, they had to "brave the elements," as it were, to undertake the task.

A second interesting point about the method of defending is that it occurred in a setting where the operating belief system supported the existence of varied styles of teaching. Sandra Miller, for example, had been hired by the principal expressly for the alternative style she employed. Within this atmosphere one could not criticize her style, if one disagreed with it. Rather, one had to criticize her execution of the style.[6]

When teachers engage in helping others, talking with friends, or defending colleagues, they may not do so in order to build community. The effects of such efforts, however, enhance community.

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[6] Others who have studied teachers have also commented on the difficulties teachers face when they choose teaching styles considered nonconforming (see, for example, McPherson, 1972).

OBSTACLES TO COMMUNITY

We have examined both the formal and informal mechanisms at Vista City Elementary which contributed to the enhancement of a psychological sense of community. Obstacles to the building of community existed as well, however, and we examine three of them here: the professional mystique; teachers' conflicting values; and the quality of leadership.

The Professional Mystique

In Chapter 4 we discuss how the professional model interferes with teachers' relationships with parents. In this section we examine how the professional mystique interferes with the development of a sense of community among the teachers.

The teachers wanted to be considered professionals. They were motivated partly by the desire to get the recognition for their work they felt they deserved. To be considered professionals they needed to act the part. They tended to use, consequently, the language of professionalism to refer to each other. In interviews they referred to other teachers in the school as "colleagues." They frequently avoided the use of "friend" to describe other teachers they liked and with whom they spent time.

There is another aspect to the colleague-friend issue as well. All women have friends; only professional women have colleagues. The teachers needed to emphasize their status. This need is revealed not so much in their use of "colleague," but more in the discomfort the teachers felt with the use of the word friend. Their focus on professionalism was a defense against their situations. The teachers did need to continually reassert to the community, particularly to the professional community surrounding Vista City Elementary, that their work was difficult and important.

An additional factor is the status of the researcher. The teachers knew that I had connections to the university, and was professional myself. It was important to them, therefore, that I understand their social conception of themselves. Had my social status differed, some of the teachers might also have presented themselves to me differently.

As an interviewer it took me a while to understand the responses I often received to questions about whether a teacher had friends on the staff. Christine Bart, for example, said that she did not "mix business with pleasure." She had colleagues at school, but friends at home. Laurie Hallock did not describe the teachers with whom she spent time as friends, either. In fact, she reported that she could only call teachers "friends" if she saw them socially outside work, and she did not: "I really like to separate work and home and when I go home I don't like to see people that I work with. I don't like to see people outside of work."

Kate Bridges was describing to me her decision to cut her hours on the job because she felt torn between work and family. Then she described how "renewing" a particular relationship had been with a student teacher because they communicated so well. She said;

> One of the reasons I was staying so late was I had a student teacher and we'd stay for an hour or so after school every day and talk. That was colleagueship!

As the interview continued, I asked her about her relationships to other teachers in the school in addition to the student teacher. I inadvertantly, however, changed the language from "colleagues" to "friends." The change in language registered with the respondent, however, and she immediately asserted that though she had friends at school, she was so busy she did not get to see them. "Colleagues" indicated a professional, work-related situation. When one had interactions with colleagues, it was part of the job. "Friends," however, are part of our personal lives as well as our work lives. For a woman who experiences inner conflict over the adequacy of the time she gives to her family, it is difficult to justify staying after school for an hour to talk with a friend. It is much easier to justify talking with a colleague.

The professional mystique intervened in other ways as well. One of the more apparent ways was its effect on teachers' willingness to ask each other for advice (see Little, 1991). The fear of appearing unprofessional hampered teachers' queries of one another.

Heather Samuels, for example, had a gifted child in her class with an extremely high I.Q. She found it troublesome teaching this child, and dealing with his mother. She knew she was not as bright as the child, she said, and sometimes when he made a comment she did not understand, she would say, "That's a good point, Ron. I'm glad you said that," just to remain in control. I asked Heather whether she had thought of speaking with Amelia Dickenson, the sixth grade teacher, who had wide-ranging experience working with gifted children. Heather replied that she did not know Amelia and did not want to ask her for advice because she did not want Amelia to think that she did not know much. As she put it, "I don't want to be in the situation of the professional giving advice to the amateur." If she knew Amelia better, she said, she would consider asking, but since she did not know her, she could not predict her reaction.

Teachers sometimes wondered what professional ethics meant in relation to solving problems they had with another colleague. Could professionals get outside help or solace for a problem with a coworker? Dana Barrett felt in a bind for just that reason. She said she was considering giving up her mainstreamed class of typical and autistic children in order to avoid working with Jeff Kearnes. "It's just terribly hard for me because I don't work well with Jeff. I don't get along with him and I don't like working in a close relationship with him and this all makes it very difficult."

I asked her whether she had spoken with the principal about her problem. "No, I haven't," she said. "I worry that it's not professional of me to do this. I don't know whether I should tell about Jeff that way." Had she shared her discouragement with Maria Johnson, her close friend? "Well,there again," she answered, "I feel that it's not professional to talk about another colleague like that." Dana felt she was left with the choice of staying in the program and consequently having to work with Jeff or leaving the program even though she enjoyed both the experience and working with the parents of the children with autism,in order to create distance between Jeff and herself. Her understanding of the professional ethic offered her few means to negotiate, work through or seek help to resolve her conflicts.

Professionalism was like a mantle that teachers wore. Some wore it casually, flung around their shoulders so that it would not get in their way. Others clasped it tightly around themselves so that it would not fly off. For some, then, it acted as an impediment; for others, it left their hands free for important work. The problem of recognition for the importance and difficulty of teachers' work was a real problem. Whether the mantle of professionalism eased the problem is unclear.

Different Values

Teachers suggested another obstacle to the development of a close community at Vista City Elementary: conflicting values. This criticism was more prominent among those teachers who were more intellectual and child-centered in their work. Kate Bridges explained, as we discussed earlier, that while "the staff is nice," they did not all have a point of view on important issues. They had not gotten together to struggle through disagreements.

Kate also felt that other values separated the teachers, values that arose because of differences in teachers' life situations. She very much enjoyed the company, for example, of Meg Tinker. Meg was a single woman without children, however, and it was difficult for Kate to get together with Meg socially. If Meg had had a family, Kate could have invited the entire family over (as she had Amelia Dickensons's). Instead, she had gone out to dinner with Meg alone, and then felt guilty because she was staying away from her husband and family on a school night. Kate felt that single women, or perhaps women without children, led such a different life, that the conflicting values that arose were hard to surmount.

Jessica Donwit shared this view. She looked for a friendship with another teacher who worked and had small children. She would have liked to share some of her personal burdens with another woman who also faced similar problems. Sandra Miller's life situation was different; her children were older, and she had to do less juggling. She felt she could only attain a closeness with someone who shared her kind of experiences.

Sandra Miller found it easier to spend her lunch hour, her chance for a break from work, with the children in her class than with other teachers because of a conflict in values. In response to a question about her needs to be around other adults, Sandra responded, "As far as I know, there aren't too many people in this school who have close to the same interests or values as I do." One of those who did, Jessica Bonwit, never went to the teachers' room for lunch either.

Had Sandra, Jessica, or Kate been part of a team that wanted and was able to work together, they might have been able to overlook certain value differences in order to develop a working team. The sixth grade and fourth grade teams also had differences over how to teach, personal interests, political perspectives. Amelia Dickenson, for example, was interested in the women's movement, but the other three members of her team were not. Amelia said to this researcher, once, in front of another team member, that she saved talking about women's issues for her women's group. She knew that I knew what she meant. Her team member, though, asked her what she meant by a women's group, what she did there, why she went. She clearly knew nothing about this part of Amelia's life. But it was not important to Amelia that she did. Amelia shared enough important issues with her team, they had developed a good enough working relationship, that sharing every value was not important.

Jennie McAuliffe and Heather Samuels shared even more values than did members of the sixth grade team. They were both in their twenties, they were both single when they began teaching together, they were friends outside of school. Their values were not in conflict, and they found it easy to work together on a team. Sarah Jacobs, who was older, played a more motherly role, and consequently fit in well, and Suzanne Marquette, the fourth team member, was easily accepted as part of the team.

Kate Bridges, Jessica Bonwit, and Sandra Miller all wanted a different kind of work environment than they found. They had high expectations for what level of community and what type of atmosphere should be available for teachers at Vista City Elementary. They found few others with whom they shared enough values to engage with and thus meet their needs for community with others.

Leadership

A third obstacle to community building, from the teachers' perspective, was the quality of leadership provided by the principal. We discuss leadership issues in Chapter 6 in relation to conflict; here we discuss it in relation to the development of community.

We can ask, what role did the principal play in the development of community at Vista City? How did her perspective on her role compare with the perspectives of the teachers? As we discussed in the chapter on conflict, June Robinson's leadership style was one of laissez-faire. She promoted an atmosphere that supported variety in teaching styles because she felt it was the only way to meet the needs of such variety in the student body. Some teachers thought that June was friendlier with certain teachers than she was. Jessica Bonwit, for example, could not (she felt) tell June about the dilemma the kindergarten team faced over whether to order first grade math books for their advanced students, because in her mind, June and Christine Dart, the first grade team chair, were very close. Christine, however, while she knew that June liked her and "relied on" her, did not know whether June did or did not support some of the things that she did. She did not always know where she stood with June.

Sandra Miller had thought deeply about this issue. As she explained it,

> See, I don't think she approves always of these things that go on, but she thinks, well that is their way of doing it. Who could say to somebody like Mrs. Dart, who gets twenty kids through level eight in first grade, "You're not doing a good job." She says instead, "Well, let the parents decide if this is what they want or if that's what they want." Would you rather have your child doing field trips and science experiments and get through level 5, or would you rather have them get through level 8 and learn their science whenever they get around to it?

Sandra had deduced June's view from having taught in the school for a year. June had never said directly to the staff what her policy was on teaching styles.

She had simply enacted it. Direct discussion of the issue would have left some teachers feeling more clear about how they fit into the school.

Direct discussion was simply not June's style, however. She saw herself as helping to build a close-knit community. She did it, however, in nonverbal ways. She instituted an aerobics class for the teachrs two afternoons a week because she felt they needed "renewing." She attended the Susan B. Anthony party to support the teachers. She threw a surprise party for Maria Johnson when her adoption came through. She encouraged teachers to form a support group to discuss feelings of burnout many of them reported. She reported feeling supportive of her teachers. She said supportive things about them in the course of interviews.

June Robinson did not like to engage in extensive dialogue, however, and her teachers felt this to be a lack. They wanted to communicate more. They wanted to engage each other, and June did not support this feeling (if she knew about it). As we said earlier, she said that teachers did not enjoy talking with other adults because they felt more comfortable with children. Her teachers, however, were wishing for more dialogue with adults. This lack of connection between principal and teachers both signified as well as lowered the sense of community.

June's style of decision-making also influenced the level of community among teachers. The teachers felt that they would be more a part of the community if they could have more "input" in the school. June did not lead, however, by encouraging group decision-making. It was not that she was anti-democratic and consequently authoritarian in her style. It was rather that she was diffident to this issue. To lead democratically, one must feel comfortable, perhaps welcome, engaging in dialogue. June did not welcome it.

COMMUNITY AT VISTA CITY ELEMENTARY: MIXED MESSAGES

We have examined what contributed to building and obstructing a psychological sense of community at Vista City Elementary. Discussions with teachers suggested that they had contrasting feelings about the level of community at Vista City, and that

their standards and methods of making the decision varied. Here, we examine some of these contrasting views on community at the school. It is particularly interesting to note how contradictory the messages are.

This was Carrie Amundsen's first year at Vista City. She "liked" it because the "staff is wonderful; everyone is friendly and helpful." She particularly liked the "loose atmosphere." Teachers walked through the halls with coffee cups in their hands. She wished, however, that it were more intellectually stimulating.

Marge Stearn, the "MA Sub" who was planning to accompany the child with autism back to his own school district (see Chapter 3), found Vista City "a cold place" where you "have to fend for yourself." Her only good friends, she said, were her team members.

Gwen Farley, a speech therapist, held just the opposite view. She found the atmosphere warm and welcoming:

> I love working at Vista City. It's a great school--really like a family. If something great happens to you, everybody will cheer with you; if something bad happens, people really commiserate. I love being a part of this school. The other teachers are just wonderful.

Gwen felt right at home at Vista City, and looked forward to lunch hours in the teachers' room so she could "grab a few minutes" to see other teachers with whom she enjoyed spending time.

Laurie Hallock would like to leave Vista City if she could get transferred to the school of her choice. She felt there was no sense of community at the school. No one had shown support for her, she said, when her father had had a heart attack and needed open heart surgery:

> My father had a heart attack, a third heart attack and needed open heart surgery. It was on Valentine's Day, and nobody came in to ask me how things were. And no one offered to do anything, and here I was running this Valentine's Day party with hearts all over the place, and my father had just had open

> heart surgery. June knew because I had told her why I was staying out of work the day before. But June didn't come and do anything for me, so there's really no sense of community around here.

She thinks the reason there is no sense of community is because there are so many different kinds of kids in the school. This causes a tremendous amount of work, so no one had time to do things for one another. She said that she does not do things for other people either because she is "too swamped with work."

There were other kinds of opinions on the Vista City community as well, however, opinions that did not rest on how much one did for another. Josephine Keller's last position had been in a junior high school. She said about this school, "This place is like a sorority. I've never seen so many women." Barbara Himmitts described the atmosphere in a different framework altogether: "If you're not a hard worker, you don't fit in here. Of course not all of us are hard workers. There are a few who aren't; but their lives are made miserable because of it."

Dana Barrett thought it was a wonderful school in a wonderful community. She liked the diversity. The fourth grade team, particularly Jennie McAuliffe, found this aspect stimulating as well. Amy Michaels shared these feelings. She emphasized how much she liked the values about special education that were present in the school and supported by the principal.

We have heard the criticisms of the level of community from teachers like Kate Bridges, Jessica Bonwit, and Sandra Miller. It is important to note that some of their specific criticisms--like the lack of teachers meetings--were shared by other teachers, like Christine Bart and Lisa Novak, whose own teaching styles were very different from these three teachers.

Another factor in Jessica Bonwit's life was the anxiety caused by her uncertainty over whether she could continue at Vista City the next year. Would another teacher with more seniority from a school that was being closed get her position? Even in the midst of her anxiety, however, Jessica was a community builder, worrying about others' quality of life. If she stayed she would get one of the larger kindergarten

rooms. She hoped she got notified early enough to help the teacher who would get her old room, she said. She did not want the teacher to be too devastated at the lack of supplies (since Jessica rather than the school owned them). She was indeed a community builder.

In spite of the different values the teachers held, they were all in quest of community. The community took different shapes in teachers' individual minds, but as a concept it was a shared value at Vista City Elementary.

CHAPTER 6

TEACHERS IN CONFLICT

Sometime during the fall, the sixth grade team got word from the district social studies curriculum committee that the state had dropped "world communities" from the social studies curriculum. In its place had been substituted "economic geography." The sixth grade team was unhappy with this decision. Not only did they like teaching world communities, they also felt it was important to examine culture in international perspective while students were in elementary school. In their view, sixth grade students were ripe for the study of world communities. They questioned the "appropriateness" of economic geography for sixth graders.

The sixth grade team at Vista City Elementary was in conflict with the state (and the district social studies curriculum committee). How did the team handle the conflict, if indeed they expressed it at all? Was it resolved to the teachers' satisfaction? In this chapter we will examine how teachers articulated the nature of the conflicts they faced and what methods they chose to resolve them.

Social conflicts are indeed complex affairs: their analysis may be used to illuminate many aspects of an organization's or person's nature. In this chapter we describe the ways in which some of the teachers who taught at Vista City Elementary (and at Archduke, as well) thought about, talked about, and attempted to resolve the particular conflicts they faced. The content of the conflicts, while important (what, after all, concerned teachers enough to generate the tension that can result from conflict), must share center stage with the processes these women chose to bring resolution.

We are exploring conflicts in this chapter for two reasons. First, the data suggested many different instances of conflict that occurred during the school year. If one focuses on those incidents which occurred with great frequency, one would of necessity, in this case, explore conflicts teachers experienced.

Second, women who teach elementary school have been described as "tractable subordinates" who are "comfortable with hierarchy" (Simpson & Simpson, 1969). Given this description, one might expect that women who teach elementary school might be compliant, timid folk who do not initiate actions to resolve conflicts to their satisfaction.

In this chapter we describe some of the ways in which teachers dealt with the conflicts they faced. Did they, indeed, behave as "tractable subordinates"? How women handle conflict has been an area of interest for students of the new scholarship on women. This investigation, then, will hopefully contribute to this larger domain.

The chapter is divided into three sections. First, we will define conflict, and describe the different dimensions of the term as we employ it in this chapter. Second, we will examine the principal's role in providing an atmosphere condusive to conflict resolution. How did her staff perceive her qualities of leadership? How did she interact with her staff during meetings? We compare meetings at Vista City Elementary and Archduke Elementary to contrast two styles of leadership. Third, we examine individual conflicts, and the methods teachers chose to resolve them.

To focus a particular chapter on conflict is somewhat contrived as conflict is examined in other chapters of this report. We see, for example, conflicts between teachers and parents, conflicts between teachers and the superintendent's office in Chapter 4. While recognizing the artificial nature of this division, we employ it because it allows us to examine the process of conflict resolution. In other chapters we focus more on the content of the conflicts.

DEFINITIONS OF CONFLICT

Academic disciplines use the term "conflict" frequently but with varying meanings. The INTERNATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, for example, has entries on psychological, political, social, and anthropological conflict. We draw on sociological

and psychological definitions of conflict for the theoretical dimensions they provide.

Psychological and social psychological definitions of conflict focus on its occurrence within the individual: "A conflict is characterized as a situation in which oppositely directed, simultaneously acting forces of about equal strength play upon the individual: (Deutsch, 1954: 205). These forces are opposed, they are usually mutually exclusive, and as the definition emphasizes, they act simultaneously upon the individual. These forces may be impulses, desires, or tendencies. Teachers experienced psychological conflict when they wanted to work, but when they also wanted to please their husbands (who did not want them to work), or when they wanted to live by principles that might run contrary to school policy but keep on the principal's good side as well.

The sociological definition emphasizes, as we would expect, conflict as it occurs between individuals or groups of individuals (even though there are psychological ramifications of social conflict):

> Social conflict may be defined as a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals. Such conflicts may take place between individuals, between collectivities, or between individuals and collectivities (Coser, 1968: 232).

We may describe the above examples of conflict--between wife and husband, between teacher and principal--as instances of social conflict. If the conflict with the principal concerns a district policy, and the principal is seen as representing the district, then we may also describe the conflict as between an individual teacher and a collectivity. If many teachers share this view, we may describe the conflict as occurring between collectivities.

Sociologists have noted that conflict does not always serve negative consequences. The existence of conflict in an organization is not, that is, necessarily a signal of potential disintegration. As Simmel

argued, "a certain amount of discord, inner divergence and outer controversy, is organically tied up with the very elements that ultimately hold the group together" ((1908) 1955: 17-18). We do not, therefore, make any assumptions here that the existence of conflict at Vista City Elementary School reveals the level of the vitality or health of its organizational climate. Conflict can, in fact, invigorate an organization if members' challenges work toward improvement in its functioning: "The clash of values and interests, the tension between what is and what some groups or individuals feel ought to be, the conflict between vested interest groups and new strata demanding their share of the wealth, power, and status are all productive of social vitality" (Coser, 1968: 235). We would also expect that there is inherent conflict between the roles of principal and teacher, although teachers may accept this conflict as "natural" and principals may attempt to minimize the inherent "conflicts."

Sociologists also offer insights about factors which affect a conflict's intensity. The level of group identification is central: "Conflicts are likely to be more intense, and more violent as well, to the degree that the contenders are collectivity-oriented rather than self-oriented and hence consider that their struggle is waged for the sake of super-individual ends" (Coser, 1968: 234). In the case of Vista City Elementary, we examine the level of group identification in the successful resolution of a particular conflict.

While we will depend on these theoretical definitions to inform our understanding of events, we also use the term more casually. We use "conflict" to mean a controversy, a disagreement, an opposition. As discord, it reveals a lack of agreement among persons or groups. It can arise as dissension. It is a condition marked by disagreement. Discord implies sharply opposing positions within a group preventing united action. These are mild versions of conflicts. A harsher version suggests an antagonism of ideas or interests that results in open hostility or divisiveness (AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY, 1973: 279, 376).

We emphasize the range of levels because the teachers' actual conflicts represented such a range of positions. Some kinds of conflicts were out in the open at Vista City Elementary. In these cases most

teachers could share the same position on an issue. In other cases, individual teachers experienced a sense of conflict but they might not express their views openly. The conflicts, in other words, occurred on different levels, over different issues, and among different parties. These conflicts ranged from friendly disagreements to outright rebellion.

THE STRUCTURE OF LEADERSHIP--CONFLICTS IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT

The nature of leadership in the work setting plays a major role in determining the ways in which conflicts get resolved. In this section we examine the kinds of leadership exercised by the principals at Vista City and Archduke. How did the principal in each school exercise her authority? Did she create a democratic atmosphere in which teachers jointly participated in making decisions and resolving conflicts in which they were involved? Did she delegate authority?

Two sorts of data provide responses to these questions. The first kind of data is interview data with teachers which revealed their perspectives on the school leadership. The data may have been in direct response to a question on leadership, or it may have been initiated by the respondent herself. The second is observation data of the principal interacting with her staff. We have data from each school setting on faculty council meetings. An examination of these meetings suggests some aspects of the principals' leadership styles.

Other important features of school atmosphere, in addition to the leadership style, affect conflict resolution. A key one is the nature and needs of the population served by the school. We will just briefly review some key differences between the two schools. Vista City Elementary was located in a university neighborhood, and served the children of academic and professional people. The school was well integrated both in terms of race and socioeconomic background. Students' reading and achievement test scores were high.

Archduke Elementary, on the other hand, served families that were among the poorest in the city. Teachers reported that in the winter some pupils come to school with no jackets. And in the "freezing weather" would only have a thin sweater on against the cold. Teachers felt if it were not for a box of coats kept in the school for such occasions, students would "really be freezing." To work at Archduke, they said, teachers needed to have a high level of commitment.

We now examine the nature of leadership. First we look at teachers' perspectives on the principal at Vista City. Second, for comparative purposes, we will examine faculty council meetings at both Vista City and Archduke.

Teachers Talk about Leadership

As at many schools, teachers at Vista City varied in their thoughts about their principal. The range of views, however, held a certain continuity. Whether individual teachers found her "supportive" or "not so supportive," they all agreed that she was a principal who "did not give much direction." Whether teachers minded that lack depended on their own needs and situations.

Were there any patterns to the perspectives on June Robinson's leadership abilities? I would suggest that there were. On the whole (though not always), teachers who were new to the school (though not necessarily new to teaching), were more vocal in their desire for more contact with the principal. Jessica Bonwit, for example, said that June's style was "to give freedom but not support." She "wouldn't really call her supportive." She said that she often would not see June for two to three weeks at a time, and June did not often come into the classroom to do either informal observing or "to see how things were going," unless she were doing a formal observation. Included in Jessica's definition of "supportiveness" was the giving of critical feedback from the principal to the teachers. She contrasted June with Ginnie Carlisle, another principal with whom she had previously worked. Ginnie used to come around to visit classrooms "all the time" and would say things like, "Gee, I thought you did that very well," or "I really thought that was just great." She would also share her views

about why a particular thing that had been tried "didn't work." And whenever Ginnie was asked if she had any ideas about a particular educational issue, "she would give you a pile of books six inches high. I found that very stimulating."

As if to justify her wishes for more contact with the principal, she explained, "It's not that I need a lot of praise or anything, but I do want some feedback about things, and I can use some criticism." She gave a specific example of the kind of feedback she had in mind: "You know, I want somebody to come in and say, 'I really see what you wanted to do, and the reason that didn't work with the kid was because you were doing such and such.' I like that kind of criticism. It makes me feel like I'm not going stale." This approach sounded remarkably similar to Ginnie Carlisle's. Several other teachers for whom Ginnie Carlisle had been principal spoke of her with unqualified praise, reinforcing Jessica's perspective.

Sandra Miller was also new to Vista City. She shared Jessica's perspective, although she had her own way of seeing things. "I don't think she is decisive, and I'm sure other people must say this about her. See, she is very sweet. I mean, she's very nice." She did not offer the kind of leadership, however, that Sandra wanted. "I would like to have had long talks with her about what I was doing." Sandra said that she had been hired as an "alternative" at the first grade level, this alternative being the English infant school model. June Robinson had also taught this approach when she had worked with first graders, so Sandra expected to share intellectual interests with her, and to have the opportunity to discuss them.

Sandra knew that June shared her values:

> I had a chance to look at her bookshelf in some detail. Because of the fire it was moved out of her office and I helped to move it back into her room slowly but surely. I had a chance to see what her books are --they're all good books. You wouldn't find them on Christine Bart's shelf. June's very intellectual about it and I know she understands what I'm trying to do. But she should have helped me a little bit.

Sandra understood June's leadership style. She just did not approve of it.

Her description of what she had missed during the school year because of June's style, seems wistful:

> I would always like to give the children as much leeway as I could. So if I were thinking about what a principal should do it would be the same, I would think. That's my way of doing it. That's her way of approaching people too. She'd like to give you as much leeway as you possibly can have. But I'm not talking about her telling you what to do. I'm just saying it would have been nice if I had had someone to talk to.

While Sandra turned elsewhere to find people with whom she could talk, she found no other person besides June who had had similar training:

> She's the only person who's read some of the same books. She's the only person who knows how I was trained to teach reading. But she's also read some different books so she could say, "Why, Sandra, why don't you read such and such a book. It will help you out." It was disappointing to me that she didn't have time to talk to me.

It was especially difficult for Sandra because her style of teaching conflicted with many other teachers. She was often criticized. Verbal support from June, who approved of her style, would have helped her.

Amelia Dickenson also did not look to June Robinson for advice. Amelia is a very experienced teacher who was in her first year at Vista City. She felt that June had "no depth, and also no process skills." She said that she did not have a good relationship with June. From her perspective, June was "pulling back this year." She did not know whether June was planning to leave, according to the rumor going around, but she saw her principal as "not involved" with them. She thinks that one source of their poor relationship is that she somehow makes June defensive; she feels somehow "threatening to June." She said that she would really like to have more faculty meetings and inservice sessions, but said

that she could not mention these issues to June because "she would take it as a criticism. It's part of her defensive posture."

Many teachers, even those who described June as "supportive," could not make suggestions to their principal because they worried the suggestions would be seen as criticism. Even expressions of their wishes sometimes went unexpressed so that they would not be taken as criticism. Carrie Amundsen, also new to the school, though not to teaching, described June as "very supportive as a principal." She did say that June "was a person who didn't give you a lot of direction. Since I'm a teacher who doesn't need a lot of direction, I like her a lot." Carrie was critical, however, of teachers at Vista City who did "not pull their own weight." She wished that June would be more firm with them. When asked whether she felt free to suggest to June that she be more firm, Carrie answered, "No."

Kate Bridges, though she had been at Vista City for several years, was also critical of June's leadership style. In her words, "June is not what I would call an aggressive leader." Kate is particularly critical of the lack of meetings and the style of the faculty council meeting. She had a specific vision of what she would like to see happen: "I'd like to see June say at the beginning of the meeting something like, 'Okay, what would you like to talk about today?'" Kate criticized the fact that there was no agenda setting at these meetings, but felt she could not voice her views because June could not take criticism. She said that faculty council representatives often enter the meetings with "burning concerns," different issues that are "weighing heavily on their minds." These concerns may find room for expression during the last five or ten minutes of the meeting, and it is never enough time.

Amelia Dickenson's view that she threatened the principal was echoed by Christine Bart, who also felt that more meetings were needed. She said, "June is often threatened by women. So she doesn't hand out compliments easily." She also echoed Sandra Miller's view that June had a difficult time making decisions, and gave some examples of June's inability to decide on issues which Christine felt were important. Christine suggested, as Jessica had, that June gave freedom but not support.

She also used Ginnie Carlisle as an example of a teacher whose "presence was felt by teachers." Christine compared going to district meetings under both these principals. When Christine asked June to get her a substitute for an afternoon, so that she could attend a very important meeting about one of her students at the Committee on the Handicapped, June waffled about what she would do. Or when she had reading committee meeting, she could not get an answer from June quickly enough. June said, "I don't know. I'll have to tell you the last day." We will discuss in a later section how Christine handled this. With Ginnie Carlisle, however, Christine reports that if there were no substitutes available, Ginnie would have been willing to come into the classroom and teach the class herself in order to free up the teacher. As Christine describes it, "Like if you had to go to an important meeting, Ginnie would be willing to come in and say, 'Hey, you go to that; I'll teach the kids painting,'or whatever." (Christine taught kindergarten at the time.)

How did those teachers who liked June Robinson and who found her supportive talk about her? Lisa Novak said that the first year she came to Vista City Elementary School she found June "very supportive." She recalls saying to June, in fact, "Gee, you're the first principal I ever worked with who says, 'You're doing a really good job.'" She was critical of the principal for how the structure of the faculty council meetings, however, which she described as "a total waste of time." She compared them to faculty council meetings at her former school. Here, she said, everybody sat and took notes on whatever June had to say, and then brought the messages back to their teams. At her former school, however, much more "dialogue and discussion" characterized the meetings: "I can remember sitting on the council at _____, really arguing with the principal about issues, and sometimes I would win the argument. My views might then become new school policy."

Maria Johnson was friendly with June and described her as a "very supportive" principal. She said that "one of the good things about her, one way I find her very supportive, is that she always puts letters in my file if I've done something well." The previous woman who had been principal at Vista City, she said, gave very little supportive feedback, and there had been no such letters in her file.

Barbara Timmits, the instructional specialist, liked working with June very much, and felt that June was "very supportive" of her. She said, "June never assigns you to do something that she hasn't tried herself." She said that she had the feeling that many administrators often did this--they would have you do something that they knew little about. In her position, Barbara often observed in classrooms. She felt positively about June's policy of never asking her to reveal any information about the teaching qualities she observed. She said, "I think June feels that evaluation is her job and that my role is a purely supportive one."

Josephine Keller said that she found June supportive as a principal, and that "she was the first principal I ever worked with who treated me as an equal." She added that, "June is a supportive person, but if you're a teacher who needs a lot of direction, June is not the right principal for you." When she was a parent (of a child in the school), she said, she had found it very difficult to communicate with June, but as a teacher, she likes working with her very much.

Amy Michaels thought June was "just a great principal." She "just loved" working with her. She found that June had "always been wonderful to me and very supportive." She added that she knew that some other teachers have had problems with June, and that they had talked with her about it, but that she has never had that experience. She felt that June had good supportive values about mainstreaming which melded with her own, and this made her feel very much at home at Vista City.

Dana Barrett had many positive things to say about June Robinson. She said, "June is just great. She's very supportive. She wants each of the teachers to grow and advance and she's really willing to support them to do those kinds of things--to take courses and go to meetings and so on. She's just wonderful." Dana said that she was "friends with June, but even if I weren't I would think that she was wonderful professionally." Dana shared June's views on the importance of mainstreaming and taught a mainstreamed classroom that was a kind of showpiece in the Vista City public schools. Interestingly, however, in light of these comments, is Dana's report of difficulties she was having with a teacher with whom

she had to work closely. She was having "terrible disagreements" with her coworker: "It's just terribly hard for me. I don't work well with him. I don't get along with him and I don't like working in a close relationship with him." I asked her if she had expressed her concerns to June. "No," she said, "I worry that it's not professional to talk about another colleague like that."

Four other teachers all had very positive things to say about June's high level of supportiveness, with fairly minor complaints. A couple of teachers wished that she would handle difficulties with the parents a little differently. Another teacher wished that June would get the paperwork done more quickly than she did.

The comments of only two teachers did not fit into the above patterns. One woman seemed to feel highly critical of June, but acted hesitantly about blaming her openly. The other woman felt that it would be a better school if June were more authoritarian, and gave more direct orders. She would prefer it, she said, if all the teachers had to submit their lesson plan books to the principal each Friday for her signature. If she could transfer to another school where this kind of atmosphere was in place, she would.

How do we make sense of the conflicting testimonies about the quality of leadership at Vista City? How can we make sense of Christine Bart's comments that June is not supportive of teachers attending meetings, taken together with Dana Barrett's view that June was especially supportive of just that policy? We must look to the social and biographical contexts of different teacher experiences to understand their comments. Maria Johnson, Barbara Timmitts, and Dana Barrett had been on a team together that was closely knit, and highly functional. They had developed other sources for advice and comfort. Additionally, all three women had concerns outside of school that took away from any singular focus on school life. Maria Johnson had health problems that left her weak and tired much of the time. Barbara Timmitts had two young children and was concerned about managing work and family life. Dana Barrett had recently separated from her husband. These concerns softened the importance of June's leadership abilities for them.

Kate Bridges, Jessica Bonwit, and Sandra Miller all had high and intellectual expectations for their work setting. They were looking for a principal who was more engaging and interpersonal; they had all experienced teaching in other settings where certain things had been handled better. Additionally, they had been exposed, whether through reading, discussions or travel, to unique teaching situations. They wanted to replicate some of what they had read, discussed or seen.

These comments are offered not to negate the value of what any individual reported. The point of presenting varying views is not to seek out a compromise position that includes a little of each view. Rather, we seek to understand those factors that may affect individual teachers' views of the principal. We cannot, therefore, answer the question about whether or not June Robinson was a supportive principal. We can simply note certain impressions that our observations provided.

First, it was the teachers' idea to describe the principal as supportive. It teaches us that teachers value supportiveness in a principal whether or not they felt June Robinson embodied that quality. And even when teachers described June as supportive, but then revealed examples where she was not supportive, we learn that it was important to them that their principal be portrayed as supportive.

Second, teachers hold different meanings of supportiveness. Some teachers felt that putting positive letters in a file indicated a supportive principal. Other teachers had expectations which included interpersonal communication styles. Some teachers who had friendships with the principal talked with her frequently. Some who knew her only professionally wanted more contact.

Third, in interviews with this researcher, June Robinson often made supportive comments about teachers. She commented on Kate Bridges' teaching sabattical, "Oh, it's such a loss having Kate leave us. She's such a good teacher." She described Christine Bart as a "super-teacher." She praised the kindergarten team for spending so much extra time writing a grant. She sympathized with teachers' low salaries. She told me, "What a fantastic bunch of teachers the fourth grade team is." Before interviewing any teachers, in fact,

I left my first extensive interview with June thinking how well she spoke of her teachers. I never, however, found her in any teachers' classroom, except during inservice days.

The faculty and faculty council meetings also operated as the teachers described them. She was somewhat business-like, did not attempt to stimulate dialogue, and gave no appearance of enjoying the sessions. She was often critical of the teachers for some behavior of theirs. I commented in my notes, in fact, after leaving the first faculty council meeting I attended, that June used language that appeared to be part of a "facilitator" mode, but her tone and style suggested an opposite approach.

We might say that June was supportive to some people and not to others. One teacher suggested this view was accurate when she remarked that June was a principal who played favorites. The teachers she liked, she supported. Those she did not like, she did not support. June often made supportive comments to me about the very teachers who described her as "unsupportive."

June did believe in different styles of teaching, and had made it part of her program to have teachers with differing styles at each grade level. Teachers liked this policy of hers, and felt that it represented her support of varying styles and points of view. And all the teachers but one (the one who wished June demanded to see lesson plans each week) highly approved of the individual freedom that teachers experienced at the school.

What they criticized about her was her hesitancy to engage her staff interpersonally. Many teachers complained about the lack of meetings as well as the content of them. Sandra Miller felt the content of most of the meetings held during the year could have been handled through memos. Christine Bart reported having to convince June to hold a meeting to discuss upcoming building renovations with the whole faculty. June had planned to make a few announcements about this at a council meeting. The faculty meeting that was finally held about the renovations was extremely lively. Christine had been right. Everybody did want to hear about it--and wanted to ask many questions as well.

There was also general agreement from both those who did and did not feel supported by her, that she was a principal who neither had a strong presence in the school, nor who had a personality that was engaging so that she sought out teachers for dialogue. It was a kind of laissez-faire regime.

Faculty Council Meetings: Leadership in Action

The faculty council meetings at Vista City and Archduke Elementary Schools provided good opportunities to observe the principals and their staffs interacting around school governance issues. While the main focus of this report is on Vista City Elementary, time was spent observing at Archduke for purposes of comparison. Here we suggest the different leadership styles of the principals as they are revealed in faculty council meetings. One meeting from each school will be reported. Another faculty council meeting held at Vista City when June Robinson was absent will be discussed in a later section.

The monthly faculty council meeting at Vista City was held in June Robinson's office, ten minutes after the school day ended. Council representatives, teachers from each team, kindergarten through sixth, sat on chairs in a large circle. The instructional specialist, Barbara Timmitts, was also there as were the principal and the assistant principal, Bob Jackson. June started the meeting by announcing the first agenda item and beginning to talk about it. She held a typed agenda on her lap. She had the only copy of it and she did not read through it before starting to discuss the first item. Bob Jackson sat a little behind her and took notes. The first item concerned substitutes. June announced that everyone had to have an extra key made to their rooms and to keep a key hanging so that substitutes would be able to get in and out of their rooms without having the kids be locked out. There was a little discussion.

Other business items followed. She said, for example, that she wanted to advise everyone present that the purpose of the faculty council was for the representatives to go back to their teams with notes from these meetings to discuss policy. She was critical of the representatives for slacking off in their meetings with other team members. She also discussed school closings because of inclement

weather conditions occurring after the school day had started. She again remonstrated teachers to stay in the building until they got official word to leave. The first several items, in other words, were informational, but they also included criticisms of teacher behavior.

A long discussion followed about ordering supplies: how to do it, the deadlines for orders, what should be ordered. Barbara Timmitts played a major role in the discussion since she does the ordering herself. The discussion went back and forth between council members with Christine Bart, Lisa Novak, and Barbara participating heavily. and Jean Webster and Geraldine Foster participating a little.

The superintendent's meeting that June Robinson and Christine Bart had attended was the next item on the agenda. After speaking for a sentence or two, June said, "Christine, would you like to tell what happened?" Christine said, "No, you do it, June. I'll interrupt when I want to say something." June did most of the telling, but Christine interrupted now and then.

June told the group about two proposals she had submitted that she hoped would be funded, one on mainstreaming and one on a resource center for the gifted and talented. There was no discussion, except an informational query from one teacher about whether students in the gifted and talented program would leave their classes for a whole day or a half day.

June announced that if any teacher in the primary grades was interested in having an integrated class like Dana Barrett's, she should contact her. There was probably more discussion about this issue than about any other item on the agenda. Teachers discussed the pros and cons of having a class. June described the tremendous progress the kids in these classes had made. Although it had been a very challenging experience for the teachers, there were some compensations like very small classes. Christine Bart made the comment that, "the kids are doing well, and making great strides, but the teachers are a wreck." June and a couple of teachers described success stories of children in the classes.

The meeting appeared to be going over the allotted time, because June began to look at the clock frequently. But Bob Jackson had a few comments to make to the teachers about disciplinary policies.[1] There was general laughter over issues like wearing clogs, bells in the hair, and stocking caps to process hair. The meeting ended.

At Archduke, the meeting was also held in the principal's office. Instead of being called the "Faculty Council," it was called "P.I.C.," "Program Improvement Council."

At Archduke, the P.I.C. meets at 2:00, forty-five minutes before the end of the school day. Teachers' rooms are covered by substitutes during that period. When I arrived for the meeting, I saw the principal, Rebecca Brownstein, putting pieces of dittoed paper in certain faculty mailboxes. She handed me a copy of the paper as well, which turned out to be an agenda for the upcoming meeting. The agenda was a fairly typical one, covering a variety of items under the headings: "old business," "new business," "committee reports," and "miscellaneous."

As Archduke is a much smaller school than Vista City (500 compared to 800 students), the meeting was smaller as well. We sat around a small table in Rebecca Brownstein's office. Rebecca introduced every representative as she came in, and described their positions to me.[2]

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[1] The discussion that followed is reported in Chapter 3.

[2] These introductions stood in marked contrast to my experience at the faculty council meeting at Vista City Elementary. This difference may be due to the opportunity I had had at Vista City to introduce myself and my study to the teachers at a faculty meeting.

The group began to go through the agenda. While most of the supporting materials for the discussion sat in a pile that Rebecca had brought to the meeting, and while indeed she led the meeting, the interchange between staff, and between staff and Rebecca was lively. Individuals freely offered ideas, and contradicted Rebecca or each other if disagreements occurred. A resource room teacher, in particular, would often interrupt Rebecca to make a point that she wanted to have made in a certain way, even if Rebecca was discussing this point. Once she had taken over a part of the discussion, she would field any questions that would arise.

Rebecca supported and promoted this kind of dialogue, continually encouraging teachers to become involved in decision-making. She would say, for example, "Here's something that we need to do. What do you think we should do about it?" One of these issues was the new retention letters. The central administration had developed new letters that were supposed to be sent out to parents in May to notify them if their child was to be held back the next year. These letters came in many varieties, all coded with different numbers, and it was very important, administratively, for representatives to get down the information clearly, take it back to their team members, and get the requests for the numbers of these letters back to the administration quickly. Rebecca asked them how they wanted to go about doing this, and the staff discussed it among themselves for a while with Rebecca listening, and then reported to her about what they wanted to do.

In another example of this leadership style, Rebecca said that the Council needed to decide how the grades should be divided into teams for the next year. This was particularly important for dividing up the "Title I kids" to see who was going to fit into different grades. Apparently, a meeting of four to five teachers would take place at Rebecca's home one night to decide how many teams there would be the following year. She said, "I think we should have between four and five teams or five and six teams, and we'll decide that night." The response among her teachers was, "Gee, that doesn't seem like it's a big question." She replied, "Well, this year, we found out that we had too many kids on each team and we want to change that. I don't care which number we have, but I think we should all get together and decide it."

The tone of the meeting was informal, but task focused. The informality was clearly represented when a teacher came in late and seeing that there were no more chairs, sat on the floor. Rebecca said to her, "Gee, let me run out and get you a folding chair," to which she replied, "No thanks, this is fine."[3] The task orientation of the meeting appeared in the large number of agenda items that were discussed in forty-five minutes, the full participation of Council members, and Rebecca's style of speaking quickly.

Only one agenda item was not discussed. Under "old business" was listed on the paper, "Interpretation of P.I.C. Minutes------Teams." When a Council member asked why they were skipping over that item, Rebecca said that she was going to save it for the full faculty meeting because she wanted to go over that point with everybody. I was unsure if this were true. While it may have been, I wondered if Rebecca had not been planning to criticize team members for not reporting well enough to their teams but did not want to criticize them in front of me. True or not, this would have contrasted dramatically with the style of the principal at Vista City, who had no inhibitions about criticizing her faculty often in front of me. June may have felt greater rapport with me as I had spoken with her often during the school year.

Rebecca's style represented a different approach to leadership than that of June Robinson. Rebecca consciously attempted to involve the teachers at the school in major decisions. As principal, Rebecca structured the teachers' involvement, she continually pressed for high involvement in school life, but she encouraged a democratic participation among staff. She emphasized communication, and spent time in discussions with teachers. June was less democratic, and less concerned with or perhaps less skilled at communicating with her staff. She did not emphasize processes that would improve the participation of her teachers in the major decisions of school life.

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[3] A teacher would never have sat on the floor at Vista City. The atmosphere simply was not that casual.

We have examined the ways in which authority was displayed and leadership revealed at Vista City, with a comparative look at faculty council meetings in another school. We suggest that the ways in which conflicts are resolved should be examined against the backdrop of the atmosphere the leader of the school promotes. Clearly other factors, as we said earlier, are also important. The principal's role in encouraging or discouraging the resolution of problems through discussion, however, is key. She must, therefore, be a person who can handle conflict, who refuses to avoid it. In the next section we examine individual conflicts that arose, and how teachers chose to handle them.

CONFLICTS: THEIR ORIGIN, NATURE, AND RESOLUTION

In this section we discuss conflicts that teachers had with other adults with whom their lives intersected. We do not discuss conflicts they had with children because we spent no time observing in the classroom. We focus on conflicts with peers, leaders, parents, and the central office.

This section is organized, however, not around the person with whom the conflict existed, but rather, according to the ways in which the conflict was resolved. We have categorized the management or handling of conflict into four areas: 1) unhappy compliance; 2) the stand-off; 3) silent non-cooperation; and 4) the open challenge (whether by negotiation, confrontation, or open noncooperation).

Unhappy Compliance

Teachers sometimes felt conflicts at Vista City Elementary that they did little about but complain. Rather than bring the conflict into the open, or challenge the authority or colleague with whom they disagreed, they complied with the opposing side of the conflict. In each of these situations, the teacher felt that to win the conflict, she would have to challenge the authority, whether it was administrative, collegial, or parental. Compliance meant that teachers had to live with the conflict and perhaps negate their own values or concerns through thier lack of action. Unhappy compliance with conflictual situations tended to reinforce teachers' low feelings about the difficulties of their occupation.

No teacher with whom I spoke at Vista City Elementary had many good words for those inservice sessions run by the district offices. At one particularly bad session, some teachers signaled their discontent by doing more than grumbling. Sylvia Richardson was not among them. Last fall, she told me, the superintendent's office had gotten a woman to come and speak who charged a high fee. The superintendent paid it. "She was telling us all these things that were just silly. All of us knew you just couldn't do them in this situation." It must have been a difficult audience for the speaker, at least as Sylvia described it. "A lot of people sat back in their seats, crossed their arms and literally laughed out loud at her. Others got up and walked out on her in groups. If the superintendent and the board hadn't been there, a lot of the rest of us would have left too, bit I figured we were paid to go there so we had to sit." Sylvia continued to complain about this session long after it had ended; it seemed to continue to stir a high level of feeling in her.

Sylvia experienced conflict with the superintendent's office over values, e.g., what the inservice experience should be like. But because she had been unable to act on her values and challenge the conflict, she had been forced into a position of unhappy compliance. She would continue to complain, because she had not acted to change.

Kate Bridges had experienced a conflict of values relating to the school policy of transferring a child out of one classroom (hers) and into another without first informing her. She had felt very upset with June for transferring the child out of her classroom, but she had not spoken with June about her feelings because she "felt it was hopeless. Nothing would change." Word got back to June through the "grapevine" and she called Kate to her office. "Why," June asked Kate, "are you upset about this?" Kate reported giving "an amorphous answer," not wanting to say, "June, why didn't you deal with me?" And of course, Kate reported, nothing changed. Kate would continue to feel resentment, and would continue to complain. She described herself as "burned out."

Instances of unhappy compliance were numerous. A teacher had a conflict with the principal over her policy of calling as few meetings as possible, but did nothing more than complain to colleagues. The

fourth grade team felt a conflict of values with the central office for the manner in which a project was being administered. They complained to each other about how they had not been consulted, about how they were being treated, about how it was the central office that would "get all the glory in the end," but their feeling was, "We must work it out--we have no choice."

These are a few examples of the kinds of conflicts that fell in this category. Conflicts in this category appeared to happen between teachers and an authority they felt could not be challenged. This view is represented by a teacher who was critical of herself and colleagues for their inability to accomplish change. Teachers, she said, tend to criticize people at the top, but they don't act themselves. Operating among this set of conflicts is the belief that the authority cannot be challenged, the conflict cannot be resolved.

The Stand-Off

In this second category, the existence of a conflict may or may not be recognized. If it is recognized, and if it is perceived that no honorable solution exists that can resolve the conflict to the satisfaction of both sides, a stand-off occurs. The conflicting parties, that is, stay at arm's length from each other around the issue (although they may be friends over other issues).

One school policy that caused stand-offs to occur frequently was a policy that seemed to benefit the diverse student population at Vista City Elementary. The principal had tried to place teachers with quite varying teaching styles at each grade level. While some teams were able to see the differences as strengths, other teams could not overcome the differences, and hence held other team members at arm's length.

Lisa Novak described Charlotte Royce, another member of her team, as "a really nice person. I talk to her a lot as a friend." They have very different philosophies of education, however, and "you can't team when you have conflicting philosophies." She offered some examples:

> Charlotte doesn't do things on schedule the way I do, and I feel that you need to have a schedule. And I don't want a kid from her class in my room for reading for just twenty minutes, because I do reading, language arts, spelling, writing, and English all as part of one thing, and I need a kid for all of that so I can check on his seat work.

She said that Charlotte does not like to rearrange her schedule "that way" so they do not team. They remain friends, but they do not discuss this issue. They remain at a stand-off.

It is important to understand that in this case, the stand-off works--even exists--because these two teachers like each other. Lisa feels differently about a third team member whom she (and most of the other staff and principal) feels is "incompetent." Lisa described this woman as "professionally incompetent," she would not trust one of her children in the room. "You've got to trust a colleague in order to put your child in with her and I just don't trust her. After all, I'm in charge of these kids for the day and I need to feel comfortable when they're not in my room." She thought the woman should have been fired. In this situation, a stand-off could not occur.

Stand-offs did occur, however, in other situations where teaching styles or values differed, but teachers needed to work together. Sandra Miller and Christine Bart were both first grade teachers, but they had very different teaching styles. Christine played a major role in the district reading committee, and tended to be a firm believer in the reading curriculum. She referred to herself as "a structured but warm" teacher. Sandra, on the other hand, had been trained in England, and ran much more of an open classroom. Other teachers often spoke critically of the high noise level in her classroom. Sandra and Christine were on a single team, full of conflicting feelings about the "best" way to teach in a school where the dominant perspective is that there is strength in different styles.

Sandra Miller had closely analyzed the unspoken tension in their relationship. "Mrs. Bart said to me recently, 'I don't teach reading, I teach decoding,' and she does." Critical as Sandra felt of this method, she had to admit that Christine was very

successful at what she did. She noted that Christine generally finished her planned work ahead of schedule, and had time for creative projects at the end of the year, creative projects that Sandra admired. When Sandra was hired, in fact, Christine had interviewed her for the position (Christine chaired the first grade team). Sandra reported that Christine said to her, "I teach reading as it has to be and must be taught. How are you going to come in and teach it without knowing what I know, because obviously you don't like my view of reading at all?" Sandra said that she did not have a very good response to that question. She is, she said, as strong a person in her own way as Christine is. Consequently, what they had "was not the easiest situation." Sandra said that they have "gotten on fine" by not talking about issues.

Any substantive dialogue they had seemed to occur through veiled comments. Christine invited Sandra and her class to come on the first grade picnic. After, they were searching for something to talk about that they could agree on. They wanted to avoid conflict. Sandra remembers their conversation: Christine said, "'It was a nice picnic, wasn't it?' I said yes, and we both tended to agree about certain things, like we went to a certain place to see a show, a clown show that never showed up, and we both were very annoyed because we're both interested in our children." Their discussion went a little further. Sandra said, "Gee, Christine, I should have organized some cute activities for the children to do on the playground." Christine said, "My kids have been working so hard all year they need a day to do nothing." Then Christine added, "My kids do what I tell them to do all year." Sandra interpreted Christine to mean, "She's saying that maybe my kids could use a little structure. But she never said that to me directly." Sandra summed up their situation as one of respect, maybe grudging respect, from a distance: "She knows that everybody's entitled to their own way."

Silent Noncooperation

Some conflicts occurred that teachers could not compromise on. We might put this differently. Some teachers could not choose "unhappy compliance" as a way of handling certain conflicts they faced. They felt so strongly about these issues that they wanted--they insisted upon--favorable resolutions. Concurrently,

they felt that an open challenge would not enable them to win. Sometimes in these cases, they had unsuccessfully taken advantage of the formal channels open to them to challenge viewpoints that conflicted with their own. To handle the conflict, teachers chose "silent noncooperation." That is, they quietly, sometimes even surreptitiously, acted on their values, and refused to cooperate with the rule with which they had conflict. They did so not to change an institutionalized mandate with which they disagreed, but to have their way. We are brought full circle back to the conflict with which we opened this chapter. Let us review it.

The district social studies committee had informed all elementary schools during the fall that the state had dropped "world communities" from sixth grade social studies. In its place had been substituted "economic geography." Bernice Smith and Amelia Dickenson expressed disappointment and disagreement over the decision. They were disappointed because they enjoyed teaching world communities. They disagreed with the state because they felt economic geography was a more difficult framework for sixth graders than world communities. They wanted to emphasize cultural aspects of Asian and African life.

By sixth grade at Vista City Elementary, the students "travelled" to classes with different teachers. Bernice Smith was one of the teachers who taught social studies for the team and she had made up her mind about what she would do. She was "just going to go ahead and fit in what I want to anyway. They'll come around to my way of looking at it one of these days." I asked her, "Bernice, are you a rebel?" "No," she replied, "I'm just doing my own thing." And so she did. She did not openly challenge a state policy with which she disagreed. She silently noncooperated.

Conflicts of this type did not always occur with administrators. They sometimes occurred with other teachers, but always teachers who were perceived as authoritative. We examine two examples, the first at Vista City, and the second at Archduke.

Conflict between the kindergarten and first grade teams had been brewing for some time. The first grade teachers, particularly the chair, Christine Bart and her close colleague, Karen Lowenthal, were

critical of the kindergarten teachers for "not emphasizing workbooks" enough. The kindergarten teachers saw it, as one of them described it, as pressure from the first grade team to focus more on academics. From the first grade teachers' perspective, the kindergarten teachers should get students more academically prepared for first grade.

The kindergarten teachers had a gripe against the first grade teachers as well. Students in some of the kindergarten rooms excelled in arithmetic. Kindergarten teachers wanted to begin first grade math with those students who had finished all the kindergarten work. The first grade team, however, did not want to have to "group" for math. In order to have ungrouped math lessons, they could not have some students be very far ahead. According to one of the kindergarten teachers, Christine Bart "has everybody start from page one." The conflict over the math books had boiled down to this: Christine Bart had told the kindergarten teachers not to order any first grade math books for their use, and the kindergarten teachers wanted to do it.

How did the kindergarten teachers handle this conflict? They chose the method of silent noncooperation. Jessica Bonwit described what happened. At a meeting of the two teams to discuss this problem, Jessica found:

> Christine was so strong and domineering that all of us sort of gave in on it. I was very upset, though,so I called Jack Williams, who is head of math, and asked him whether we didn't have the right to use a first-grade math book, and he said, "Yes, you do. Just go ahead and order it." So we did.

They ordered the book, but they did not tell Christine Bart about what they had done. They planned to do so only after they had started using the first grade math books. Jessica also explained that she had not consulted June Robinson: "You have to go around June because Christine and June are tight." She held up her right hand and intertwined her second and third fingers. "They're tight like this." Jessica had been chosen to reveal the team's action to Christine "when the time came." She was already dreading it. For this team, silent noncooperation was one step on the ladder of how they would manage this conflict with the first grade team.

Teachers sat around a table in the faculty room at Archduke one June noon hour discussing the winding down of the school year. One teacher confided that she had heard that the resource room teacher, the same woman who had spoken so assertively at the P.I.C. meeting, had announced that all of the reading books for the resource program had to be turned in by Thursday. She said that she felt angry about it because the resource room teacher would not compromise on that date, claiming she needed that much time to do the inventory. Other teachers joined in the criticism. "Well," the teacher said, "I'm not finished with my reading program and I'm darned if I'll stop my program on Thursday, just to please her." She was going to continue her reading program. For whatever her reasons, this teacher had chosen the path of silent noncooperation. She would not confront the resource room teacher openly, but neither would she comply with a mandate with which she disagreed.

The Vista City Elementary School building was about to undergo extensive renovations. A renovation committee had been formed, consisting of the school principal, teachers and community parents. Conflict had developed between the principal and the staff over the makeup of the committee. In two instances, teachers attempted to resolve the conflict to their liking through silent noncooperation.

In the first instance, Charlotte Royce expressed her interest in joining the committee to Christine Bart. Christine advised her: "Don't go in and ask June if you can be on the committee. Tell her you plan to be on it."[4] In spite of Christine's advice, however, Charlotte was turned down by June. She reported her "devastation" to Christine. When the night of the meeting drew near, Christine said to Charlotte, "Look, I'm going to pick you up and bring you to that meeting anyway." They both went to the meeting, and Christine

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[4] Christine had worried that as the time of the first committee meeting drew near, she had not seen June announce the names of any teachers who would be members of the committee. She was anxious to make sure other teachers would be on the committee with her.

reported that June was "gracious and lovely" to Charlotte. Silent noncooperation had worked successfully.

In the second instance, teacher involvement on the committee was of concern as well to Bernice Smith, the Vista City Elementary School representative to the Vista City Teachers Association (VCTA). Bernice was told by June Robinson that in order to keep the renovation committee from being "unwieldy," she would appoint a few teachers and parents. Bernice went down to the VCTA office and spoke to their lawyer. He said that any interested teacher could join the committee. Bernice then sent out a memo to all teachers at Vista City Elementary announcing the time, date, and place of the meeting. She did not tell June that she planned to send out the memo, she simply sent it out. June found out about it (of course), and called Bernice into her office to tell her how unhappy she was about it. According to Bernice, the principal "talked herself out." Bernice then replied, "I hear what you're saying and I understand that you're unhappy," whereupon she turned around and walked out. While this action may seem close to outright resistance, it is important to note that the letter was sent out secretively. In open resistance, there is no attempt to be secretive in the act, although in strategic discussions about what to do, there may be secrecy.

A teacher sometimes chose silent noncooperation as a method of conflict resolution in order to play for time. We can see this in the example of returning books at Archduke. Only a week and a half remained to the end of the year.

Jessica Bonwit also chose silent noncooperation as an interim method to handle a conflict. The interim period, though, was longer. When she gets tenure, she explained, she would openly act on her principles. Jessica refused to teach the Distar reading program as it was supposed to be taught. She experienced a conflict of values with the program. She explained her position:

> I just won't teach Distar the way it's supposed to be taught. I'm happy to use the Distar materials, but I want to use them in my way. See, I believe that Distar may teach kids to read, but it doesn't teach kids how to

> think, and the results of not learning how to think are disasterous. And, when you teach Distar the way it's supposed to be, the kid has no way of intuiting how to find things out. If you don't get the right answer right away, you give up. I won't teach that. I guess that's an issue I'd resign over.

She felt that she could not compromise in her actions on the Distar issue, otherwise she "could not sleep well at night." But she would use silent noncooperation, teaching her method as she chose, until she got tenure (if this tactic would work that long).

From these examples it is clear that silent noncooperation did not mean that the teachers did not speak of their actions. Teachers were not silent with those who shared their views, and certainly not in front of this outside observer. Rather, they were silent with the party or collectivity with whom they were in conflict, whether it was the district offices, the principal, or another teacher.

The Open Challenge

Conflicts that teachers handled by openly challenging those values or policies with which they disagreed fall into this last category. While in all the other categories the parties may have hoped for change, with conflicts handled in this manner, if change occurred, its results were immediately apparent. With conflicts handled by silent noncooperation, for example, it was not so immediately apparent whether the tactic chosen had been or would be successful. Success might only prove temporary. The teachers sometimes chose this silent noncooperation to play for time.

When teachers handled conflicts through direct and open means, their immediate goal was to challenge an institutionalized or official procedure or policy in order to change it. This attempt at conflict resolution took different forms. On the milder end, teachers attempted to resolve the conflict to their benefit through direct and open negotiations. On the more severe end of the continuum, teachers openly resisted some plan through direct confrontation. They said, "We cannot cooperate." Let us look at some examples of the different ways in which teachers

handled conflicts openly and directly, whether through negotiations or direct confrontation.

Direct negotiations occurred when teachers stated their point of view as in conflict with another point of view, offering reasons to account for the conflict. Sandra Miller, for example, "had certain objections to the Distar Program." She felt that in spite of statistics that show that children do learn to read on Distar, it was not complete enough. It had useful aspects for children having a tough time reading, but it needed to be expanded.

The district's appointee to administer the system's Distar program "has a reputation for coming in like a sargeant major and saying, 'You can't do this; you must do that.'" Sandra wrote a paper describing her criticisms and outlining her own method of using Distar. She wrote it to give to the woman on her upcoming visit to the school. The woman's reputation made her feel, as she described it, as "taking the bull by the horns." She was apprehensive about the reaction she would get. After the woman read the paper, however, she told Sandra, "You're doing all the right things."

In the next example, a teacher confronted a parent who appeared to the teacher to exhibit insensitivity to the teachers' lives. Christine Bart, who co-chaired the renovation committee, was unhappy about parents' participation. She described an incident with a parent where she had directly stated her views to him.

A major topic of discussion at a recent renovation committee meeting had been the proposed placement of the cafeteria. The architect had planned to use the space presently occupied by the gym. The present gym had a central location in the school, being surrounded on four sides with only corridors between the gym and many classrooms. Christine reported that many of the teachers, including herself, were upset at the idea of having a "noisy" cafeteria surrounded by classrooms. She confided that she thought the architect is fairly "unmovable" about the placement, due to budgetary concerns, but the teachers on the committee felt it was very important to give their views to the architect anyway. So, they did. After an hour and a half, one of the parents said, "Look, I think we've been talking about these insignificant details for long enough.

Let's move on to something else." Christine then said, "Look, for teachers this is not an insignificant detail. If you're not interested, don't participate, but these are details that concern our lives, and we should talk about them." Then, Christine said, the committee continued its discussion of the proposed cafeteria placement.

In the above two examples, the teachers did not share any indecision they felt about how to proceed to solve the conflict. In the next two examples, the teachers had not yet faced the other party with whom they experienced conflict. In the first example, the teachers are observed seeking advice on how to handle their conflict. In the second, a teacher shares her plan on how she intend s to handle the conflict, and we witness some earlier attempts.

Several teachers at Archduke Elementary were having a problem with one of the kindergarten teachers, and, unsure about how to resolve it, sought the advice of Bruce Pickett, the school psychologist, during lunch. The conflict involved a meeting with children and their parents. The teachers did not want the kindergarten teacher to be present at the meeting, but were unsure whether to schedule the meeting secretly or tell the teacher directly that she should not come. Bruce delved into the reasons for their feelings, and tried to draw analogies to other conflictual situations. He asked them how they might handle a conflict in another setting, in order to help them clarify their attitudes in this situation. The teachers decided that they felt too uncomfortable holding the meeting in secret, and planned, uncomfortable as the prospect appeared, to talk about the situation directly with the kindergarten teacher. At the end of the meeting, the group had reached a decision: they would directly articulate their views to the party with whom they were in conflict. They thanked the school psychologist enthusiastically, and left the teachers' lounge.

The second incident which had not yet been resolved involved the renovation committee and once again, Christine Bart. Christine, along with Mark Cabrini, another teacher, had been appointed by June Robinson as co-chair of the renovation committee. Christine felt in conflict with June about whether her position as co-chair was "real" or whether she was only a "figurehead." She reported feeling uncomfortable

because she did not know where she stood, and did not know what kind of a role she was playing. She complained, "Even at the faculty meeting today, June was the one who got up and did all the talking and I am supposedly chairing the committee. The only way that I got a chance to speak was to raise my hand and announce, 'I have a few things to say.'"

Christine said that she had made an appointment to see June and speak with her about the situation. She said she needed to know "exactly where I stand on this." Christine described what she hoped the outcome would be: "My ideal situation would be if June, Mark, and I made all the decisions together. If we were really true chairmen together, that would be great. But as it looks now, if June is really going to ride herd on this thing and not be able to delegate any authority, then I think I'm going to say, 'June, you don't need me.'" Christine's husband taught at a school in the district which had just completed its renovations. Christine had seen the process at the other school. As she said, "At _____, the teacher who was appointed as head of the committee was the person who <u>really</u> was the chair." Christine had compared their situation with another and found her own lacking.

As an observer at the faculty meeting, I could attest to Christine's recounting of what had happened there. While June had praised the renovation committee members by name, she had made no attempt to include them in the presentation. Had Christine not asserted her own role at the meeting, no renovation committee member would have participated. What had not been apparent to this observer at the meeting was Christine's hurt at June's treatment of her. Christine planned to resolve the conflict by directly negotiating with June over her role.

As we have moved from category to category, we see more insistent challenges to authority, and watch the teachers asserting more personal power. Each step, while not successive, demands greater self-confidence and group cohesion. In all the examples we have given we have not seen the teachers resolve conflicts as a group until the last few instances. The personal consequences for individual actions were sometimes painful for teachers. Lisa Novak, for example, had chosen a different path for herself this year. The previous year, she said, she had started to speak out on some issues where teachers and principal

had conflict. In public meetings she found "nobody" speaking up to support her, and it was upsetting. She mentioned, as an example, conflicts over the spring production the previous year. Teachers had come up to her and agreed with her sentiments against such an elaborate performance, but when it came time to vote for it in the public meeting, she was the only one who voted against it. As Lisa saw it, "most people seem to be yes-people in front of June."

Christine described a similar feeling, although she had not become less assertive on account of it. She had spoken up at a faculty meeting on an issue relating to a deadline for reporting test scores to parents. Christine had announced at the meeting that the teachers just could not cooperate with June's plan. They had never given this test at Vista City Elementary before this year, and besides, they were right in the middle of doing report cards. "We just can't do it." Christine reported that she then turned around to the other teachers and said, "Come on, everybody, am I the only one who feels this way, or are there other people who feel this way, too?" Then, she said, many people spoke up. Christine worried that if she had not spoken up, no one would have because, "you have really got to know your mind and feel confident in order to be able to speak up." Christine had helped the group refuse to cooperate in a conflict situation.

We have discussed direct negotiations, and offered as well a small example of direct resistance. Finally, we focus on an observed example of teachers' open and direct resistance in a conflict situation. The teachers acted as a group when they were in conflict with an administrative decision. The setting was a Faculty Council meeting which was led by Bob Jackson, the assistant principal, in June Robinson's absence.

The tenor of the meeting differed dramatically with Bob's leadership. The meeting was more teacher-initiated. As an example, Meg Tinker said, "Boy, I hope I get to start the meeting today because I have a problem." And indeed, she did start the meeting. In fact, the first half of the meeting focused on teacher concerns.

When the teachers had finished with their issues, Bob raised a major concern. The Vista City elementary schools were having a very difficult time finding substitutes to handle the classes when teachers were absent.[5] The previous week had been "disastrous." On that Friday an emergency had occurred when four teachers were absent and no substitutes had been available. School had been frenetic and wild that day for June, Bob, and the "special teachers" who had helped out. Bob said that he and June had developed a plan to handle crises such as these when they occurred, and they were interested in the "feedback" of council members.

Their plan was that in emergency situations where teachers were absent and no substitutes were available, teachers would take over these classes during their breaks each day. That is, if a teacher had a break while their students went to art, music, or gym, she would take over the class where the teacher was absent for thirty minutes or so. Teachers would get paid extra for this work, so they would be compensated, and Vista City Elementary would manage to get through these crisis situations.

The council members reacted negatively to the request, although their understanding of the discussion differed. Geraldine Foster spoke first to say that she thought it would be a better idea to have the art, music, or gym teachers take over for the day, and to cancel the special classes. Jean Webster spoke second. She explained that as she saw it, she didn't like the idea of teachers taking over classes at all. "You don't get paid very much for thirty minutes. I'd rather have the time to myself." We notice with these two speakers that they accepted the parameters of the situation as they had been outlined by the assistant principal. Their particular likes and dislikes were then noted.

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[5] One of the reasons that the number of substitutes had diminished was because the district had revised their substitute system and payment plan. They did not want to have to pay unemployment compensation over the summer to permanent substitutes. They were having great difficulty attracting substitutes.

The other speakers challenged the very conception of the problem as one which was a problem for the teachers at the faculty council meeting to handle. Christine Bart said that she really objected to the discussion because "the substitute problem" was not a problem of the school. It was a problem of the district. If Vista City Elementary brought its special teachers out of their classes to act as substitutes, then the city would not be forced to solve its "substitute problem." Meg Tinker emphasized her worry that the teachers were even discussing the issue. She said, "It's not our problem. It's an administrative problem, not a teachers' problem. Lisa Novak expressed similar views, adding, "Let the superintendent come down here and teach when we can't get substitutes."

After a few minutes of discussion, the teachers had clearly joined forces to refuse to discuss further, let alone solve, the problem. Geraldine and Meg began to understand the issue in a new light. The analysis of the problem was clear: If they handled this problem, then the district would not have to handle it. They felt the district was at fault for its shoddy policies with substitutes. In the end, the teachers would get hurt along with the students, who suffered as it was only having one gym period a week. The best way to force the district to handle the problem was for the teachers to avoid easing the crisis for the district administration. The teachers stood firm. Bob Jackson ended the discussion, commenting, "Actually, when June and I were talking, we were talking about solving it for the school and not for the whole district."

The teachers had joined together as a group to resist a plan they considered injust. They refused to cooperate in the discussion, and consequently rejected the conceptualization of the problem as it had been drawn.

CONCLUSION

We have examined the different strategies teachers chose to resolve conflicts in their work. If we place the strategies on a continuum, we find that they represent certain patterns. We must call "unhappy compliance" a response to conflict (rather than a strategy to handle it), because the conflict is never resolved. The teacher actively initiates no change-oriented behavior.

In the stand-off, the teacher chooses to keep a distance from the conflict because it is perceived that no honorable solution exists. In order to keep peace, particularly in a system that emphasizes the value of different styles of teaching, the teachers choose to avoid confrontation. The teachers initiate a particular stance because the conflict appears unresolvable.

In the next two categories, silent noncooperation and the open challenge, more direct action is involved. The teacher chooses a form of activity (whether letter-writing, curriculum substitution, surreptitious book ordering) as a method of resolving the conflict to the benefit of the teacher. These latter two forms take more self confidence. The actor must dare to resist authoritative forms. This may occur secretively, as in silent noncooperation, or directly, as in the open challenge.

What are the effects of different forms of conflict resolution, or conflict responses on the teachers? In the more active stances, teachers acted more powerfully, and they felt "bigger." These actions, however, usually involved some form of personal confrontation, and teachers worried about the actual meeting. Jessica Bonwit, for instance, felt "apprehensive" about having to meet with Christine Bart over the first grade math book problem. Christine Bart was worried about her upcoming meeting with June Robinson over the chairmanship of the renovation committee. Sandra Miller worried about meeting the Distar administrator. Once these incidents were over, however, the open management of the conflict enhanced the teachers' situations.

Unhappy compliance was a stance that usually continued the teacher's unhappiness. It brought complaining rather than resolution. A complaining stance is a stance of powerlessness. When teachers chose unhappy compliance as a response to conflict, they chose a response that left them feeling powerless.

The stand-off was a mediating response to conflict. It left the teacher feeling neither powerless nor powerful. It kept the peace, but it did not bring teachers closer to resolving their conflicts with each other.

Of course teachers could not resolve all the conflicts they faced at Vista City Elementary School. Their principal was not a person who promoted the resolution of conflict through discussion and dialogue. She did not promote, as did the principal at Archduke, an atmosphere of shared decision-making. She did not delegate authority well and, hence, did not enhance her own. Her leadership style diminished rather than enhanced her teachers' ability to resolve conflicts. A teacher's perception that "challenging June was not worth the energy," was often based on experiences at the work setting. The choice not to act, then, was not always the coward's choice.

In this chapter we have discussed many examples of teachers' forceful and thoughtful attempts to resolve important conflicts in their working lives. We have seen many examples of teachers who do not fit the image of "tractable subordinates."

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS

We have examined some of the work-related issues women who taught in Vista City Elementary School experienced during a single school year. A benefit of the case study approach to the study of women's work is its ability to generate themes grounded in the daily experiences of teachers' lives. A weakness is the idiosyncracies of the particular school setting. Further studies of the lives of women who teach elementary school are urgently needed.

These further studies are warranted not only by the issues suggested in this and in other N.I.E funded research (i.e., Little, 1981; Hall, 1982; Schlecty & Vance, 1982), but also by the attention focused on teachers in the popular media. As Americans worry about the quality of the education provided to their children, it is important to consider the frameworks in which discussions of teachers are held. How much do we understand the role of gender in relation to teaching? Have we focused on how the rising tide of expectations for women has affected teachers to the exclusion of other issues? It is difficult, in other words, to analyze educational and personnel problems adequately without a gender-sensitive understanding of women in teaching.

The themes which were raised in this study have implications for further research. We focus on both academic and training issues.

One of the most important areas for research is the issue of women's conceptualization of career. Would examining other occupations in which women have predominated and some in which they have participated (i.e., university teaching) change our understanding of the career concept? Is the pattern of career as we know it, in other words, as generic a concept as it ought to be? Would the further study of women's work broaden or change this notion?

The domestic image of the elementary teaching role demands further exploration. What are the different ways in which teachers react against this image? What are the relationships between teachers' concerns for professionalism and their rejection of the domestic image of teachers? If teachers begin to develop a new image of teaching, will this image affect teaching behaviors?

Teachers have conflicts with parents (particularly mothers) as well as with other teachers and administrators. In relation to both groups, would the definition of these conflicts as women's issues have any effect on their resolution? Could parents and teachers negotiate their differences through a framework of women's roles in the society? Would it be effective for staff development or inservice programs to focus on the ways in which women communicate with each other? Can inservice have value if it focuses on teachers as women?

The literature on professionalism also demands further examination. This literature is varied, both in the historical and sociological domains. Studies of professionalism which essentially exclude women help us to understand the professional career as it is constructed in the public realm. Some recent studies of women and professionalization, while few in number, help us to understand the relations between autonomy and domesticity. We may ask, for example, whether the public can see "logical" connections between tending to children, on the one hand, and serious paid labor on the other.

The new scholarship on women provides an opportunity for scholars to consider the key factor of gender in relation to the occupational study of elementary school-teaching freed from stereotypical assumptions about women who choose to teach children for a living. We must explore the world of women who teach both as the women themselves see it, and as social constructions about their work are reflected in theoretical analyses about their occupation. The field is ripe for study.

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APPENDIX I

Selected Characteristics of Vista City Teachers

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Selected Characteristics of Vista City Teachers

(Grade) Team	Name	Sex	Race	Exp.*	Marital Status	Children	Age**	Service Flow
K	XXX	F	W	4	M	Y	4	Unknown
K	Jean Webster	F	W	4	M	Y-3	3	Discontinuous (family)
K	Jessica Bonwit	F	W	2	M	Y-3	2	Discontinuous (family)
K	XXX	M	W	2	M	Y-2	2	Continuous
1	Sandra Miller	F	W	1	M	Y-2	3	Discontinuous (family)

* Key: 1 = 0-5 years
2 = 6-10 years
3 = 11-15 years
4 = 16-20 years

** Key: 1 = 21-30 years
2 = 31-40 years
3 = 41-50 years
4 = 51-60 years

Appendix I

(Grade) Team	Name	Sex	Race	Exp.*	Marital Status	Children	Age**	Service Flow
1	XXX	F	W	1	S	N	1	Continuous
1	Christine Bart	F	W	4	M	Y-4	3	Discontinuous (family)
1	XXX	F	W	?	?	N	?	Unknown
1	Karen Lowenthal	F	W	2	M	Y-2	3	Discontinuous (family)
1-2	XXX	F	W	1	M	N	1	Continuous
2	Roberta Blake	F	W	2	M	N	1	Continuous
2	Lisa Novak	F	W	2	S	N	2	Continuous
2	Charlotte Royce	F	W	3	M	Y	3	Discontinuous (family)
2-3	XXX	F	B	?	?	?	3	Unknown

* Key: 1 = 0-5 years
2 = 6-10 years
3 = 11-15 years
4 = 16-20 years

** Key: 1 = 21-30 years
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4 - 51-60 years

Appendix I

(Grade) Team	Name	Sex	Race	Exp.*	Marital Status	Children	Age**	Service Flow
3	Amy Michaels	F	W	2	M	Y-1	2	Continuous
3	Kate Bridges	F	W	3	M	Y-3	3	Discontinuous (family)
3	XXX/XXX (Bridges' two replacements)	F	W	?/1	S/S	N/N	2/1	Continuous/ Continuous
3	XXX	F	B	2	M	Y-1	2	Continuous
3	Laurie Hallock	F	W	2	S	N	2	Discontinuous ("burnout")
4	Suzanne Marquette	F	W	2	S	N	2	Continuous (2nd career)
4	Jennie McAuliffe	F	W	1	M	N	2	Discontinuous (job related)
4	Sarah Jacobs	F	W	3	M	Y-1	4	Discontinuous (family)

* Key: 1 = 0-5 years
2 = 6-10 years
3 = 11-15 years
4 = 16-20 years

** Key: 1 = 21-30 years
2 = 31-40 years
3 = 41-50 years
4 = 51-60 years

Appendix I

(Grade) Team	Name	Sex	Race	Exp.*	Marital Status	Children	Age**	Service Flow
4	Heather Samuels	F	W	1	S	N	1	Continuous
5	Geraldine Foster	F	W	4	M	Y	4	Unknown
5	XXX	F	B	?	?	?	4	Unknown
5	Jeff Kearnes	M	W	3	M	Y-2	2	Continuous
5	Maria Johnson	F	W	3	M	Y[1]	2	Continuous
5	Dana Barrett	F	W	3	D	Y-2	3	Discontinuous (family)
6	Amelia Dickenson	F	W	4	M	Y-2	2	Discontinuous (school rules forbade pregnant teachers)

[1] She adopted a child while study was in progress.

* Key: 1 = 0-5 years
2 = 6-10 years
3 = 11-15 years
4 = 16-20 years

** Key: 1 = 21-30 years
2 = 31-40 years
3 = 41-50 years
4 = 51-60 years

Appendix I

(Grade) Team	Name	Sex	Race	Exp.*	Marital Status	Children	Age**	Service Flow
6	Sylvia Richardson	F	W	3	M	Y-3	3	Discontinuous (family)
6	Bernice Smith	F	W	4	S	N	3	Continuous
6	Meg Tinker	F	W	3	S	N	3	Continuous
IRT[2]	XXX	M	W	?	D	N	2	(psychologist)
IRT	XXX	M		2	M	Y-1	1	Continuous
IRT	Barbara Timmitts	F	B	3	M	Y-2	2	Continuous
IRT	Carrie Amundsen	F		2	M	Y-3	4	Continuous (but started after family)

[2] Instructional Resource Team

* Key: 1 = 0-5 years
2 = 6-10 years
3 = 11-15 years
4 = 16-20 years

** Key: 1 = 21-30 years
2 = 31-40 years
3 = 41-50 years
4 = 51-60 years

Appendix I

(Grade) Team	Name	Sex	Race	Exp.*	Marital Status	Children	Age**	Service Flow
IRT	Gwen Farley	F		1	S	N	1	Continuous
IRT	Mark Cabrini	M	W	?	M	Y	2	Continuous
IRT (special ed.)	XXX	F	W	2	M	Y	3	Unknown
IRT (special ed.)	XXX	F	W	3	M	Y-1	1	Continuous
IRT (Gym)	XXX	M	B	3	M	Y-3	2	Continuous
IRT (Music)	Josephine Keller	F	W	2	M	Y-2	2	Discontinuous (family)
IRT (Art)	XXX	F	W	4	D	Y	3	Unknown
IRT (Library)	XXX	F	B	?	M	?	4	Unknown

* Key: 1 = 0-5 years
2 = 6-10 years
3 = 11-15 years
4 = 16-20 years

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APPENDIX II

Methods and Proceedures

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This research depended on a qualitative approach to data gathering and analysis. In this Appendix we describe both the procedures used as well as their methodological justification.

Procedures

I chose Vista City Elementary as the research site for several reasons. It had an excellent academic reputation in the city. It was known for the high quality of its teachers, and it was reported to have good teacher morale. Additionally, it was an integrated school, with a peaceful atmosphere. Previous racial tensions which had arisen during the merger of two schools had been squarely faced and in large part mediated.

I gained access to the school through application, first to the school administrators (there were two principals at the time) and later to the school district administration. When the grant monies were finally approved, the administrative structure of the school had changed. There was now a single principal. I reaffirmed with her the nature of the project, and reserved time at the next faculty meeting where I could make a presentation of my research interests.

In between the time of meeting with the principal and making the faculty presentation, I had an extended interview with a teacher who was going on leave for the second school semester. This teacher, Kate Bridges, felt in a crisis about her teaching, and spoke freely and at length with me. It was an interview filled with rich data, and it provided me with a number of leads for research. Kate became a key informant for me after she returned from her trip. I continued to meet with her weekly for a year, discussing my perceptions of issues with her.

I had begun the project with several broad questions to guide the direction of the research. Underlying the questions was the assumption that it is important and valuable to learn what women elementary schoolteachers think about their work. The following questions provided a structure for the proposed inquiry.:

1. What are women elementary schoolteachers' perspectives on their work? What expectations do they have about the meaning their work holds for them? How do these assumptions affect their definitions of their own roles and their perceptions of their careers? What are their relationships like with their colleagues, their supervisors, and with significant others in their work setting? What is the nature of the social relationships these teachers establish in the school and how do these relationships affect their attitudes toward their work?

2. How do the particular characteristics of the elementary school setting influence the teachers' perceptions of their work? How is teacher morale affected by the organization and morale of the school?

3. To what extent do women elementary schoolteachers identify themselves as "women elementary schoolteachers"? How aware are they of the changing roles of women? How does their level of awareness affect their perspectives on their work and on their careers?

4. What is their depth of commitment to the profession of teaching? How do status issues about teaching affect their future plans? Why have they chosen this career?

5. What features do women elementary schoolteachers include in their ideal work setting? What are the support networks?

6. How do teachers negotiate work and family life? What factors facilitate combining work and family roles? How does the work-role of elementary schoolteacher affect one's identity as person, spouse, parent, woman?

While these questions served as broad guidelines for the research, the actual issues were shaped by the participants' concerns.

These issues emerged the first day of research. At a brief presentation to the teachers, I attempted to avoid mentioning my interest in women's issues. I said that I wanted to study teachers' perspectives on their lives because I felt that teachers had not been approached sympathetically enough. I mentioned, however, that I had learned this information while doing a chapter for a book on women and educational leadership. This bit of information must have stuck in some teachers' minds for these teachers began their interviews with the statements that they "had nothing to do with this women's lib thing."

After the talk, several teachers came up to me to indicate their interest in the study. I was welcome to come and talk with them at any time. They also offered their views on some of the issues I had raised. I took down their names and promised to contact them.

Except for the first interview with Kate Bridges, however, I made contact with teachers gradually, and always through group settings. I spent several weeks eating lunch in the teachers' room with different groups of teachers. In this way I was able to establish rapport with at least some members of every team. The exception was the first grade team. Dissension was quite high on the team because of the number of changes among first-grade personnel during the year and because of conflicts in teaching styles. Sandra Miller, for example, never ate in the teachers' room with her team. During my first lunch with some members of the first grade team I detected little friendliness, and Christine Bart was absent. I used the opportunity of the first faculty meeting I attended to meet Christine Bart. I then relied upon availability and snowball sampling to interview teachers.

I had originally hoped to interview every teacher, but it soon became clear that this would not be possible. Three teachers, for different reasons, actively resisted participating in the study. The husband of one of them worked for my husband on a research project, and I felt it would be unethical to appear to pressure her. Another refused to be interviewed and asked me to leave team meetings where she was

present. She was hostile to all researchers, I was told. A third teacher simply behaved in an unfriendly way, for what reason I never knew. Two other teachers were rarely around and had reputations in the school as "shirkers." I did not interview these teachers. Two teachers entered the school to replace teachers while I was there. They found their work extremely difficult and were troubled and reported "feeling overwhelmed" about their work. I did not interview these two teachers either. Finally, I was never able to interview two teachers for scheduling reasons alone. I did observe all teachers, however, in meetings, in the halls, and in the teachers' lounge.

While I interviewed many teachers at the school, I made the decision to focus on those whose reputations were high. The women I interviewed repeatedly took their work seriously.

The appropriateness of this decision was affirmed for me by a story a teacher told during the course of an interview. The teacher was driving her second-grade daughter's friend home one day when her daughter said to her friend in the course of some discussion about work, "My mommy's a teacher." "Yes," her friend responded, "But my daddy's a real teacher. He teaches at the University." This girl had learned early who society counts among its real teachers.

I had planned from the beginning to study another site for comparative purposes. I waited to choose the particular school, however, until I knew more about the themes that would emerge. When it became obvious that concerns about parents and professionalism were key in the minds of Vista City teachers, I decided to pick a school that might offer some contrasts in these areas. I chose Archduke Elementary, which served poor children where Vista City served the more financially stable. Archduke parents were for the most part uninvolved in their children's education while Vista City parents tended to be highly involved.

At Archduke I spent almost all my time talking with teachers in groups in the teachers' room or attending meetings. While I was able to speak with four or five teachers privately, this was an exception rather than a pattern. I was never introduced to the teachers as a group at this school, so I never had easy entre with all of them. I introduced myself by eating lunch with teachers. Earlier, I had attended a faculty-council

type meeting, so had met a few teachers there. I reestablished contact with these teachers in the teachers' room, and was introduced to more teachers from there.

After learning what kinds of issues the Archduke teachers discussed among themselves at lunch (in the presence of a visitor), I then described some of the themes that had emerged at Vista City elementary and asked for their comments. The teachers spoke freely on these issues and appeared to enjoy discussing their views on the themes as well as on the differences between the schools.

I had also wanted to interview parents at Vista City but worried that I would lose teachers' trust if this became public knowledge. I decided to wait until school ended and make appointments during the summer. An experience at a teacher recognition luncheon given by the P.T.O. near the end of the year reaffirmed the importance of this decision. I found myself standing near a parent who had been active in school affairs. He was very critical of the principal. As he started to say a few words about this, he quickly stopped talking when the principal approached. As I was leaving the luncheon I found myself walking next to him in the crowd. He had written his name and phone number on a small piece of paper and folded it into quarters. He slipped this tiny note into my hand as if he were "palming" something off on me. I interviewed him when school closed along with three mothers.

Data was analyzed during the fieldwork process as well as after all data had been collected. Those themes that emerged in the field were explored using a modified analytic inductive mode (See Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, pp. 65-68). Conflicts with parents and the importance of professionalism are examples of themes that were analyzed and further explored during data collection.

Other themes that became important chapters in the research report did not emerge during data collection. These were analyzed after the researcher had left the field. A good example of this kind of theme is that of conflict resolution.

I conducted all of the observations and interviews. The data were dictated into a recorder and transcribed by one other person. Fieldwork generated six hundred

pages of single-spaced fieldnotes. These fieldnotes were later coded and studied by the researcher. The researcher and the secretary were the only two people who had access to the notes.

The researcher spent ten months engaged in fieldwork. This period included eight months in schools and two months interviewing additional parents and teachers. While I continued to have regular meetings with one of the teachers, and irregular meetings with other teachers and with the principal during the next school year, I do not count this as a formal part of the fieldwork.

Methods

This study utilized the qualitative methods of participant observation and in-depth, open-ended interviewing.

The qualitative approach includes research strategies and procedures which produce descriptive data, people's own spoken or written words, and observable behavior (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). This approach treats social settings and the individuals within those settings holistically; the subjects of the study are not reduced to isolated variables, but rather are viewed as integral parts of a complex whole. Qualitative methods have their theoretical foundation in the Weberian sociological tradition, a tradition which emphasizes the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967).

All human experience, according to this framework, is mediated by interpretation (Blumer, 1967). The meanings which people give to their experience and the structures through which they interpret their world are essential and constitutive, not accidental and secondary, to what the experience and that world are for them. Positing a model of human beings as actively engaged in the creation of meaning and the structuring of their world, this perspective does not resist the idea that powerful social forces can shape individuals' lives. It simply emphasizes the ways in which the individuals interpret these forces.

The central methodological implication of this sociological position is that social relationships and events must be understood from the point of view of

the social actors themselves. As described by symbolic interaction theory, interpersonal relations involve the continual interpretation of the actions of others; people's responses to one another are based upon the meanings they attach to those actions rather than, say, upon the meaning that others intend their actions to have (Blumer, 1967). In order to understand the perspectives of those who participate in particular organizational settings, in this case the elementary school, it is necessary to examine those perspectives in the context in which they are generated (see Mishler, 1979).

Qualitative methods carry a hefty tradition for the study of educational concerns (see Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, pp. 3-26). On the study of teachers, specifically, qualitative methods have illuminated important issues. The work of Waller (1932) and Becker (1952a, 1952b, and 1953), while out of date, carry some important insights into teachers' lives. Both of these studies, as well as others, relate to themes that arose in this study, particularly friction between parents and teachers, but also teachers' relationships with one another and with administrators (McPherson, 1972; Lightfoot, 1978; and Rist, 1978).

More recently, several studies have focused on gender and the ways in which it influences teachers' social construction of reality. Nelson (1982, 1983) relied on oral history interviews to understand the perspectives of women who taught in rural Vermont for the first forty years of this century. Hall (1982) used in-depth interviews with teachers and subject-produced documents in the form of diaries to study the ways in which women's home and school lives are connected. Both of these studies have attempted to cast aside our stereotypical understanding of women's lives in order to reconstruct their social worlds.

Participant observation, a form of data collection characterized by a period of intense social interaction between the researcher and the subjects, is particularly suited to the study of social and professional relationships in which women elementary schoolteachers engage. The inductive orientation of the participant observation method allows the definitions and perspectives of the subjects under study and those with whom they continually relate to emerge within the context of events that gives substance to these perspectives.

Since the focus of this study was on the definitions (Blumer, 1967) that women elementary schoolteachers gave to their work, the participant observation method allowed the researcher to learn these definitions in the context in which they arose.

Teachers engage in a wide variety of physical, verbal, and mental activities, and their concrete experiences in the environment form the substance of their interaction and their learning. The participant observer participates in these activities, entering into the setting and observing behavior as it naturally occurs. The relationships between the subjects and the fieldworkers should be characterized by trust and mutual respect; this encourages an unself-conscious exchange of information and minimizes the impace of the observer's presence on the situation. Researchers conducting participant observation unobtrusively but systematically record the observations in the form of field notes (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; McCall and Simmons, 1969; Junker, 1960). Specific techniques of observation and data collection, and issues related to subjectivity, observer effect, validity, reliability, and generalizeability have been discussed extensively in the literature (Wax, 1952; Hyman, 1954; Becker, 1958; Strauss and Schatzman, 1960; Filstead, 1970; Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; McCall and Simmons, 1969; Lofland, 1971; Bogdan and Biklen, 1982).

The interview forms a central part of this research process. This kind of interview has been called "unstructured" (Maccoby and Maccoby, 1954), "open-ended" (Jahoda, Deutsch and Cook, 1951), "non-directive" (Meltzer and Petras, 1970, and "flexibly-structured" (Whyte, 1979). Ethnographers call it the "ethnographic interview" (Spradley, 1979). It makes use of neither a schedule nor a questionnaire. Rather, it is characterized by the asking of open-ended questions such as, "What makes a good atmosphere in a school?" "What do you like best about your work?" and "Do any aspects of your work distress you?" and is designed to allow subjects to answer freely from their own experience rather than from alternatives suggested by the interviewer. It has been called "flexibly structured" because the researcher does not allow the responses to wander all over the field, but rather attempts some delimitations to keep the respondent within the focus of study. Questions begin on the level of the general and move toward the specific after rapport is achieved. This kind of interview achieves its purposes when the subject's

responses are spontaneous rather than prepared, specific and concrete rather than diffused and general, and are self-revealing and personal rather than superficial or abstract (Jahoda, Deutsch and Cook, 1951). The interviewer does not just listen, but rather listens, interprets, translates, and questions (Becker, 1951). Whether conducting more formal interviews in private, engaging in informal conversations or quietly observing, the field worker's presence is an active one, but his or her involvement in the situation is directed toward understanding the subject's perspective on experience.

The central characteristic of the analytical strategy for qualitative research is that all hypotheses are firmly and thoroughly grounded in evidence (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Rather than being formulated before the study has begun, and embodied in a rigid research design, they emerge from the evidence as it is collected. One enters the field with only quite general research questions; those which guided this research were listed earlier. This evolutionary and inductive approach to research design ensures that concepts and hypotheses are continually clarified and refined. Remaining in close contact with the events, actions, and persons to which they refer, they do not become reified categories which distort the stuff of social relations. The analytical process is a dialectical one in which practice and theory feed into one another. This is a major strength of qualitative methodology (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Rist, 1977).